

Wednesday, November 4th, 2020

**1. Call to Order**

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

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

The distributed minutes from the October 7, 2020 were approved as written.

**3. Items of New Business**

There were no new business items.

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

*Welcome to our November meeting. Once again, we have a lengthy agenda today, so I am going to keep my report brief. Regardless of the length of this meeting, it will still be longer in length than the amount of sleep I got last night.*

- *Halloween was last weekend, and, as expected, there were more gatherings than in past weekends. Dean Bonner did another of his safety walks and provided masks, information about the needs for physical distancing, etc. In the next week or so, we should see if we have an increase in cases.*
- *The action plans for our Directive on Anti-Racism, Inequity, and Justice have been posted on the Senate's Teams channel under General → Files → Committee Action Plans. It also posted publicly at: <https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/social-justice>*
- *During the Pitt Year of Engagement, faculty from across the University are invited to submit proposals to support projects related to scholarship in community engagement. Engaged Scholarship is scholarship that explicitly combines academic and community-based knowledge. The projects should generate new knowledge and understanding, and could include teaching/learning, research, and creative activities. The next submission deadline is December 1 and more information is available at the Pitt Year of Engagement website: <https://www.yearofengagement.pitt.edu/>. Also, look soon for information about the call for workshops and nominations for Partnerships of Distinctions as part of the Community-Engaged Scholarship Forum and the year-long Engagement Scholarship Development Initiative that will culminate in a "summer design intensive" meant to advance an engagement scholarship project.*
- *As you may have heard, the Department of Education has opened up an investigation into Pitt over the handling of the Norman Wang case. Pitt is neither the first university to receive this kind of inquiry, nor, sadly, will it be the last.*
- *The Provost's Office sent out a survey this week soliciting feedback on how things have gone in order to prepare for the spring semester. I urge all of you to take that survey and to be*

*completely honest. This has been a hard semester for everyone and systematic feedback is the only way we can advocate for changes for next semester.*

- *Mark your calendars for Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 3pm for a Town Hall with Provost Cudd and Vice Provosts McCarthy and Godley. More details will be forthcoming.*

*I now want to introduce our new Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Science and Dean of the School of Medicine, Anantha Shekhar to address us about his vision and goals for the Medical School as well as other issues.*

## **5. Health Sciences - Senior Vice Chancellor and SOM Dean, Anantha Shekhar**

SVC Shekhar shared his vision for the Health Sciences at Pitt. The areas covered by him, in which we could be on top include:

- Research excellence
- Education excellence
- Clinical excellence
- Translational excellence
- Community engagement and health justice
- Faculty growth and leadership development
- Commercialization and product development
- Interprofessional education

His other priorities for the next 5 years include:

- Increase online education
- Expand philanthropy efforts
- Develop long-term strategies to house HS schools
- Engagement in global health.

**Newman:** Is the faculty diversity initiative that you discussed with the Provost specific to your unit only or campus wide?

**Shekhar:** It will be for HS schools as well as for A&S and other schools under the Provost, though paid for by respective units.

**Scott:** What are your plans for integration across HS schools?

**Shekhar:** Two levels of integration: (1) support for education efforts, such as integration of curriculums and experiential learning, and (2) faculty and research integration (support for multi departmental projects and collaborations)

**De Vallejo:** Any plans for incentivizing and recognizing faculty who is already engaged in projects, in which they interact with other schools?

**Shekhar:** Exactly, we need to remove financial silos, which prevent collaboration. Some will take time, but some are very straight forward and simple.

**Hall:** Our annual evaluations are structured in such a way that they do not provide option to share information about our work with other schools.

**Shekhar:** Obstacles like this should be eliminated immediately.

**Bircher:** We need a cultural change not only from the ground up, but also on the middle management level, because historically department chairs were rebuking faculty for any extra work like teaching in other school or doing anything other than specific tasks assigned by the department chair.

**Shekhar:** Yes, it is very important that implementation needs to happen on every level in order to succeed.

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

### **A. Preferred Journal List – T AFC, Professors Abbe De Vallejo, Co-Chair and Beth Mulvaney**

Mulvaney introduced the topic of discussion that came to T AFC attention – the existence of the preferred, recommended list of journals to be published in in one of our schools. Though the process was transparent, there were still some questions raised whether practice like this is appropriate and whether it is just for all faculty, whether it does not stifle the interdisciplinary research, whether it does not interfere with creativity or limit faculty scholarly activity, and how it potentially could be used unfairly in evaluation and promotion process, etc. Therefore, T AFC brought this issue to FA for discussion.

**Anderson:** Is there any sense how the list relates to Open Access or Elsevier journals?

**Mulvaney:** We did not look at this.

**De Vallejo** emphasized T AFC’s point of bringing the issue to FA attention: Is it acceptable that a school has such a list?

**Kiesling** pointed out that having a listing of the top journals to publish in is a good thing.

**Murtazashvili** added that the process how faculty determines the standards upon which they are evaluated is also important. She gave an example of journal impact factor being used in faculty evaluations.

**Morel** agreed that clear list of journals not restricted to just those with high impact factors could provide some guidance.

The point raised by Kiesling and Morel led to further discussion on what are the proper metrics to use in faculty evaluation. De Vallejo stressed that IF refers to a journal, but tells nothing about faculty scholarly output. Not being rewarded for publishing outside the preferred list can harm faculty evaluations.

**Bunger:** Most people in our school do not want such a list, because they work in newer fields. The list sets a low bar rather than a high bar.

**Frieze:** Such a list limits what people can do.

**Hall:** I cannot see any scenario under which it would be a good idea: good work should win, not where you publish.

**Bonneau** closed the discussion by encouraging TAFC to take the feedback they received and decide whether or what further action is needed.

**B. ACIE Report – Educational Policies Committee, Professors Bonnie Falcione and John Stoner, Co-Chairs**

Stoner presented the background of the ACIE Report and the Proposed Faculty Assembly Resolution on the effective assessment of teaching at the University of Pittsburgh, which the EPC brought today.

**Tashbook** expressed her objection against discontinuing student evaluations during COVID.

**Denman** asked for clarification if evaluations are specifically for faculty or extend to anyone in the instructor's role. They can be a source of gender bias for graduate student teachers according to recent study.

**Falcione:** While we did not address it, we hope our recommendation will protect all. Student evaluations are important but they cannot be the only tool of evaluation.

**Stoner:** The tools need to be improved.

**Murtazashvili:** Students opinions as customers opinions are important, but we need to speak on behalf of the most vulnerable who have hard time teaching under the COVID working restrictions and they should not be evaluated based on OMETs

**De Vallejo:** It is not clear how this resolution differs from Provost's previous recommendations.

**Stoner:** Faculty is supportive of better practice how to use teaching assessments.

**Falcione:** It is a step in right direction and our attempt to prevent schools to use student's evaluation as a single tool, before the multipronged evaluations are developed.

**Bonneau** called for the vote (via poll) to endorse EPC resolution:

YES – 37, NO -1, ABSTAIN – 3

Passed.

**7. Unfinished Business and/or New Business**

None.

**8. Announcements**

**Wilson**, as the Chair of the Senate Election Committee, reminded everyone about elections upcoming in the spring. He appealed to FA members to participate by nominating a colleague or putting your own name forward. Chris Bonneau is completing his third term, so we need to elect a new Senate President. All Senate Officer positions are open, so please consider running for any senate position. Participation in shared governance is important. The official communication from the Senate office asking for nominations would be coming shortly.

**Bonneau** added that he or Frank Wilson were willing to answer any questions one may have regarding the job involved.

**Stoner** announced that senior leadership cancelled all off campus, away and abroad programs for the spring.

## 9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:33 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: Anderson, Beck, Bench, Berenbrok, Bircher, Bonneau, Brodt, Buchanich, Bungler, Cousins, Denman, de Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Gramm, Guterman, Hall, Henker, Judd, Kanthak, Kiesling, Klem, Kregg-Byers, Kucan, Labrinidis, Maier, Molinaro, Morel, Mulvaney, Murtazashvili, Nelson, Newman, Oyler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Poljak, Potoski, Rauptis, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Spiess, Spring, Stoner, Streeter, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Vento, Wilson, Wood, Yearwood, Zack

Members not attending: Adams, Allison, Almarza, Aziz, Bickford, Bratman, Conley, Jeffrey, Jeong, Jones, Kohanbash, Kory, Miller, Mostern, Mulcahy, Munro, Paljug, Paterson, Popovich, Sukits, Triplette

\*Excused attendance: Bove, Darnell, Kovacs, Landsittel, Loughlin

Others attending: Assad, Barger, Epstein, Gabrielson, Gold, Harrell, Husted, Jones, Lalo, Manges, Mauk, Miller, Olson, Pil, Punya, SantaCasa, Sciannameo, Seldin, Shekhar, Suppok, Tuttle, Wallace, Wang, Yates, Zwick

\*Notified Senate Office