

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes  
Via Zoom**

**Thursday, October 15th, 2020**

**1. Call to Order**

President Chris Bonneau called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. After usual Zoom etiquette reminders, he asked the Council for the approval of the minutes.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Senate Council Meeting**

The distributed minutes from the September 17, 2020 were approved as written.

**3. Items of New Business**

No items of new business were raised.

**4. Report of the Chancellor, Patrick Gallagher**

Chancellor Gallagher began his report with updates on COVID-19 trends, which is downward on Oakland campus, stable in Allegheny County, but we see more cases in regional campuses and in community. Oakland campus will move to Guarded Risk Posture, which does not mean the green light, but it gives us more flexibility. Meanwhile, Johnstown Campus will switch to Elevated Risk Posture. These two changes illustrate that we are careful relaxing postures (a week in Oakland), but quick to elevate them (24 hours in Johnstown). Then, he asked Dr. Williams for the update.

Dr. Williams speaking to the Senate Council said that the compliance was good; therefore, it allowed us to move to the Guarded Posture. He reassured the audience that mitigation and testing are the most effective tools to manage pandemics. The lesson learned from Johnstown is that the cause of the new cases is socializing and neglecting masks, and not attending classes or shopping. He explained that the de-population of campuses before the winter break would happen in reverse order, to how we populated them: all will have to shelter in place before going home. He ended up by reminding everyone that testing is a tool to detect illness, but it does nothing to prevent it. Observing mitigation guidelines (masking, social distancing and hand washing) is the most important measure we can take.

Hall asked about his interpretation of CDC info that masking is not effective.

Williams: Masking is effective and it drastically reduces infections.

Macadangdang wanted to know how seasonal flu plays into covid-19 pandemic.

Williams: What we do for preventing the COVID spread, may help with reducing flu infections too.

Scott asked if people should quarantine themselves if they attended unmasked political rally.

Williams: Yes. Masking prevents exposure. Rallies where people wore masks were not a cause for any serious source of infection.

Chancellor Gallagher finished his report by talking about some of news worthy events:

- A. Launch of a new website on social justice with dashboards illustrating the racial make-up of Pitt community
- B. September meeting of the BOT, where I presented my report focused on PittSuccess initiative (Pella match and financial aid), which only after a year we can see clear differences in retention and graduation rates
- C. Panther Forward program which provides debt relief
- D. Stay At Home Coming when many awardees will be recognized
- E. Ranking news of note: Pitt is one of top public universities (39)
- F. Bigelow will open soon, but the beautification of the spot will have to wait till spring planting
- G. United Way Campaign began on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Though it is a tough time for philanthropies but it is also time of great need

Bonneau pointed to some useful links posted in the chat.

## **5. Report of Senate President, Chris Bonneau**

Bonneau reported on the last Faculty Assembly meeting, which was very busy, because FA voted on four issues during this one meeting: the revision to Grievance Procedure (AC22), new IP Policy, recommendation to Provost to create a 3-credit Black Studies course and a new statement on religious observances to be added to syllabi.

He announced that a townhall with Provost to discuss the spring semester and other academic matters was planned for November. Bonneau said that in context of grievances policy as it relates to part time faculty, the faculty expressed the desire to look at the grievance policy more systematically and to start a formal review process. This would be happening over the next several months. Finally, he said that there is a delay in making the one credit course on Black Studies to faculty and staff (it is now available only to students) due to some copyright issues, which have not been resolved yet.

## **6. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:**

### **a. Student Government Board (SGB), Eric Macadangdang**

Macadangdang started by wishing everyone a happy Mental Health Awareness Week. He said that we live in traumatic times and we need to acknowledge that we are not back to normal.

He summarize SGB activities:

A formal resolution to support a 3-credit course endorsed by FA (Board Resolution 2021-1: <http://sgb.pitt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SGB-BR.2021-1-Internal-Use-Only.pdf>)

Taskforce for revising SGB constitution

Pitt Police Town Hall: [https://calendar.pitt.edu/event/pitt\\_police\\_webinar#.X4doypNKhN2](https://calendar.pitt.edu/event/pitt_police_webinar#.X4doypNKhN2)

Mental Health Town Hall for students: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2680212195565073/>

Support for students' participation in general elections (Pitt Votes:

<https://pittvotes.turbovote.org/> )

Civic Advising Program (35 hours a week): <http://sgb.pitt.edu/student-services/civic-advising/>

Participate in BOT's Fossil Fuel Committee open forum meetings:

<https://www.trustees.pitt.edu/committee-fossil-fuels/public-forums>

Student Legal Services: <http://sgb.pitt.edu/student-services/student-legal-services/>

Student Emergency Assistance Fund: <http://sgb.pitt.edu/student-services/seaf/>

Student Leader Database: <http://sgb.pitt.edu/student-services/sld/>

Submit a Fix It Pitt! - <http://sgb.pitt.edu/fixitpitt/>

Join our Public Meeting: <http://sgb.pitt.edu/updates/public-meeting/>

Bonneau added that Macadangdang's report reminded him of another issue related to BOT: changes to faculty titles that were approved at the last BOT meeting in September. The official communication about it should be coming soon.

**b. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Nourlan Abubaker**

No report

**c. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Malena Hirsch**

Hirsch reported on the following issues:

Concerns on the shift to Guarded Posture among post-graduate students (teaching assistants feel pressured to teach in person)

Holding "drop-in" hours to support student participation in elections

Need for resources and training student who held teaching appointments in aftermath of elections

A Virtual Trivia Night had a low turnout (it is a part of our social engagement efforts)

Upcoming is the Virtual Paint & Sip event

Working with UCIS to support international students and to promote some light hearted things for them and general awareness of what they can do.

**7. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Dave Gau (submitted in written)**

*Good afternoon Senate Council members, hope everyone is well. I am pleased to report that we had once again a successful postdoc appreciation week and successful virtual version of our now 2<sup>nd</sup> annual postdoc retreat where we welcomed new postdocs to campus and orientated them to resources and organizations available to them. Thank you to Dr. Amanda Godley, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, for her support with this event and for welcoming postdocs to the University. We also held a town hall for all*

*new and current postdocs following the retreat and had a wonderful candid conversation with postdocs about the current postdoctoral climate and ensuring that UPPDA is advocating and working towards addressing the needs and concerns of postdocs.*

*In addition to our postdoctoral retreat and town hall, we hosted a viewing of the film “Under the Same Moon”, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. I am happy to report that postdocs have been very active on this front and we are fortunate to have Danny Lopez as a part of the UPPDA board who moderated a student panel with speakers from the Schools of Health Sciences on the Hispanic student experience, which was held last week.*

*Lastly, we are very excited to support and partner with the Year of Engagement’s Engaged Scholarship Development Initiative. We are looking forward to getting postdocs involved in or interested in engaged scholarship connected to this initiative.*

*That concludes my report.*

## **8. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Andy Stephany**

Stephany opened his brief report by saying that the general membership of SC did not meet since the last Senate Council meeting. The next public meeting is next week.

They are adjusting to new normal on our campus with retirees leaving. They want to hear about the adjustments to staff workload whose roles changed drastically.

Staff Council hosted a staff conversation “Stay Motivated during Challenging Times” with 75 participants and HR specialist. They are looking into scheduling a conversation on stress management in November. He thanked Chancellor Gallagher for his kind words about staff and faculty in his annual report to BOT. He extended an invitation to administration to engage with SC membership. Our staff community is a great sounding board for any upcoming initiatives.

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

There were no other reports.

- a. Bonneau presented the **Procedure for Faculty Grievances** proposal to change the faculty definition to include also part time faculty in it, so it is clear that the Grievances Policy applies to all faculty.  
Vote: YES -27, NO – 0, ABSTAIN 3  
Passed
- b. Salcido introduced the new **IP Policy**. He gave his perspective on development of this policy. He discussed changes that this policy introduced, and concerns raised during the process. It is a complex policy affecting both teaching and research faculty. It is a result of a joint work between administration and faculty through the Senate. No policy is perfect. All of them are living documents.  
Bonneau added that it passed through Faculty Assembly, not unanimously. We had discussions over three meetings, and I am pleased to see the FA’s endorsement for this policy.  
Gallagher added that it was the most complex policy we put through the new policy development process. In the past, if the discussion reached impasse, things like this

would stop, but here we were able to work through it. He said that this built our confidence that we could work on complex issues and continue to improve the process.

Vote: YES – 26, NO – 0, ABSTAIN 2

Passed

- c. Stoner introduced the **Required Three-credit Course in Black Studies** initiative. He summarized the history of this initiative and asked Professor Alaina Roberts to explain the work of the EIADAC/EPC Working Group.

Vote: YES – 27, NO – 0, ABSTAIN – 2

Passed

#### 10. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

None

#### 11. Announcements

Macadangdang mentioned that in the upcoming two dueling town halls between presidential candidates, SGB representative would be asking Biden a question, so if anyone wants to see Pitt presence, he/she can tune to Biden campaign.

#### 12. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:13 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, Aziz, Bonneau, Bonner, Bratman, Brodt, Cilli, Cousins, Cudd, Doty, Fort, Gallagher, Gau, Goundappa, Gregerson, Hall, Hirsch, K. Humphrey, Judd, Kanthak, Kiesling, King, Kleebank, Klem, Kucan, Macadangdang, Molinaro, Mulvaney, Murtazashvili, Poljak, Roberts, Salcido, Sastry, Scott, Shekhar, Stephany, Swigonova, Vento, Washington, Wilson, Wood

Members not attending: Abubaker, Bratman, Bungler, de Vallejo, Henker, C. Humphrey, Jeong, Jones, Khan, Kieselyov, Kohanbash, Kory, Landsittel, Mostern, Mulcahy, Munro, Nelson, Popovich, Potoski, Spiess, Sukits, Vilijaste

\*Excused attendance: Loughlin, Rutenbar

Others attending: Ayars, Buchanich, Corn, De Jong, Denman, Harding, Harrell, Hitter, Houser, Jeffrey, Johnson, Jones, Leifson, McMahon, Miga, Moran, O'Donnell, Pelt, Pickett, Pil, Ringler, Roberts, Seldin, Staresinic, Stoner, Supowitz, Toner, Turner, Walker, Williams

\*Notified Senate Office