

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom**

Wednesday, October 7th, 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 Assembly for the approval of the minutes.

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

The distributed minutes from the September 9, 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 October meeting. We have a lengthy agenda today, so I am going to keep my report brief. Please...hold your applause. Also, all the slides will be posted on our Teams page following this meeting so you will have easy access to the information.

Our risk posture remains Elevated. Compared with many of our peers, our campus cases have remained quite low, and this is due both to our plans and messaging as well as the buy-in from members of our community. That said, we are now into respiratory illness season, and people will be spending less time outside. We need to continue our vigilance. Even a little let down can have devastating consequences.

As they have done since the summer, the Health Care Advisory Group continues to meet weekly to evaluate the data both at Pitt and in the larger community. They do this for the regional campuses as well. As a reminder, the HCAG is tasked with recommending whether we stay in our current posture or move to either a more or less restrictive posture. The decision to move is ultimately a decision for the Chancellor to make in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

On Friday, we will have our annual meeting of the Expanded Executive Committee, which includes the chairs of all of the standing committees as well as the officers. Once again, we will be joined by the Chancellor and the Provost for the first hour of the meeting who will provide us with updates as well as field questions.

Our committees are also working on their action plans for our Directive on Antiracism, Inequity, and Justice. These will be discussed at the meeting on Friday. We are working to make these documents widely available both to the other members of Assembly as well as to the larger community. Accountability is an important part of this work, and the Senate should be held accountable for following through on our plans.

A reminder that Wednesday, October 14th, is a self-care day. That means there are no classes on that day. I encourage all of you—and all those teaching this semester—to not have exams/papers due on the 15th or 16th, if possible. We should make this as true of a self-care day as we can, and if a student needs to spend the day studying for an exam the next day, then it really isn't much of a "self-care" day.

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.

Lots of voting today, which will be good preparation for the election next month. We will be voting on the proposed Intellectual Property Policy, a revision to the grievance policy, which will apply it to part-time faculty, the recommendation to have a new required course on Black Studies, and a revised syllabus statement on religious observances.

Tomorrow, we will have our second plenary of the year on Mental Health. This time, we will be joined by Kay Redfield Jamison, who was slated to be our keynote back in the Spring. She will be joined by Sansea Jacobson, Nancy McKee, Jack Rozel, and our own Linda Tashbook. Information for joining can be seen on the slide. We look forward to seeing you then.

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

A. Procedure (AC 22) on grievances, Professor Chris Bonneau, Senate President

Bonneau explained that the above procedure contains now a modified definition of the university faculty to include also part-time faculty in it. He asked for the motion to endorse this change. De Vallejo objected pointing out that the Pitt policy on grievances was not aligned with the AAUP recommendations and that we should revise the policy more carefully. Bonneau said that we have a path to start a formal revision of the grievances policy, but for now we need to make this quick procedure adjustment in the light of the IP Policy, which is on our agenda to vote on as the next item. Karioris suggested making a motion to review all grievances policies and to approve now the adjustment to the related procedure to include part-time faculty in the faculty definition.

The voting poll is visible to all participants but only FA members are asked to vote.

Vote using the Zoom poll option: YES - 52; NO – 0; ABSTAIN - 2

Passed.

B. IP Policy, Professor David Salcido, Senate Vice President

Salcido introduced the changes to the IP Policy, by sharing the current version of the policy provided by Rob Rutenbar. He showed the section on the course materials and discussed the changes to the language. Next, he pointed out the edits in the Purpose statement, which now has language considerate of protecting the vulnerable faculty. Finally, he discussed the section on grievances and complaints, which ties to the Grievance Policy.

Denman summarized the concerns they heard during the meetings.

Frieze gave a specific example of Outlier, the outside company offering Pitt courses without Pitt faculty oversight, which was in the center of the concerns raised by the faculty.

Karioris voiced his dissatisfaction with Pitt administration for not listening to faculty concerns saying that it looks like our option is only “current edits or nothing”. Bonneau objected pointing out that faculty was involved in the shaping of the policy.

Salcido affirmed that current version is much better than original and that this document is responsive to our concerns. He watched it being changed in response to faculty concerns, and explained that some of our “asks” did not fit into the practicability of the policy. There is also no evidence that Outlier takes our course materials.

Rutenbar defended the policy saying that the revised IP Policy is more concise, clear and relevant. In response to the criticism from Karioris, he said that though the language might not have come out exactly how individual faculty would want it, but it is a result of compromise.

Bickford said that the improvements are mostly clarifications not substantive changes, and they are a better explanation of the administration’s view.

Karioris said that the language is not that different. He added that it is not right to ask faculty to believe in good faith of administration, when the examples prove otherwise.

Salcido said that he supported Karioris’s end goals, but objected to having them met at once, because the incremental change works better for a big institution.

Then, the Assembly proceeded to vote.

Vote via Zoom poll: YES – 39; NO -4; ABSTAIN - 6

Passed.

C. Educational Policies Committee, Professors Bonnie Falcione and John Stoner, Co- Chairs

Stoner said that EPC would introduce only two resolutions and postpone the presentation of the ACIE Report.

C.1. Required Black Studies Course

Professor Alaina Roberts, who led the working group to sponsor Sydney Massenberg's petition, introduced the resolution to create a required 3-credit course in Black Studies. She said that the 1-credit course established earlier this semester was a stop gap, and she pleaded for support to create a full 3-credit Black Studies Course.

De Vallejo: Shouldn't we expand racial inequality to include other groups?

Roberts: White/Black binary is the base for how the country is structure, therefore this should stand alone.

Kanthak supported Robert's stand by stating that to understand American politics one has to understand the White/Black dichotomy.

Yearwood added that changing the course into diversity pot would dilute the racism issue. There should be more courses to address other diversity issues.

Gramm supported the narrow focus and the choice of not being a paid course. She questioned if it should not be the requirement for graduation, so there is some accountability to take this course.

Stoner said that's the goal.

Kregg-Byers said that carrying the black skin makes you other in our society, so this course should raise the level of consciousness for the lower group, and by doing this, our university would already include "the other".

Chiara Rigaud added that this course is not an attempt to overshadow other minorities but to help those at the bottom.

Vote via Zoom poll: YES – 41; NO – 0; ABSTAIN – 3

Passed.

C.2. Syllabus Statement of Religious/Holiday Observances

The resolution proposes adding a standard syllabus statement on religious observances that would inform students that instructors are taking into account religious observances while scheduling tests and exams.

Bickford asked for clarification whether it is policy.

De Vallejo wanted to clarify the understanding of religious observances

Stoner commented that not all holidays would be considered holy day, it is more of a good faith agreement between student and faculty what holiday is of importance to a student.

Vote via Zoom poll: YES – 43; NO - 0; ABSTAIN – 2

Passed.

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

No unfinished business.

7. Announcements

Bonneau invited everyone to join the second Senate Plenary of 2020 (October 8, 2020 at 1 pm) via Zoom.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:41 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, Bench, Berenbrok, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Bratman, Brodt, Bungler, Conley, Cousins, Darnell, Denman, de Vallejo, Falcione, Fort, Frieze, Goundappa, Gramm, Guterman, Hall, Henker, Judd,

Kanthak, Kiesling, Klem, Kregg-Byers, Kucan, Labrinidis, Landsittel, Maier, Molinaro, Morel, Mostern, Mulvaney, Nelson, Newman, Pacella-LaBarbara, Poljak, Rauktis, Roberts, Salcido, Sant, Schuster, Scott, Spiess, Spring, Stoner, Streeter, Swigonova, Tashbook, Vento, Wilson, Wood, Yearwood, Zack

Members not attending:

Adams, Allison, Almarza, Beck, Buchanich, Jeffrey, Jeong, Jones, Kohanbash, Kory, Miller, Mulcahy, Munro, Murtazashvili, Oyler, Paterson, Popovich, Potoski, Sukits, Taboas, Triplette

*Excused attendance:

Aziz, Bove, Kiselyov, Kovacs, Loughlin, Paljug

Others attending:

Aiyangar, Barrett, Harrell, Hitter, Houser, Karioris, Kucinski, Manges, Mauk, McCarthy, Pil, Rigaud, Roberts, Rutenbar, SantaCasa, Tenney, Tuttle, Wang, Yates

*Notified Senate Office