

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom
Wednesday, October 6, 2021**

1. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

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

Minutes from the September 1, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business

No new business

4. Report of the Senate President, Robin Kear

Grief and Loss

- The recent art installation on the Washington D.C. mall titled “In America: Remember” by Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg held more than 600,000 small flags to represent each American life lost in this pandemic. Visitors could send or write messages on the flags representing their lost loved ones. It was a powerful installation that reminds me of the many losses we are dealing with.
- We are now in the deadliest pandemic in modern times. There are over 2,000 deaths in Allegheny County, almost 30,000 in Pennsylvania, 700,000 American lives gone, and 4.5 million deaths worldwide.
- Pitt recently lost the great orthopedic surgeon, Freddie Fu, who touched so many lives.
- October brings us to the 3-year anniversary of the Tree of Life mass shooting that affected so many of us in the Pitt community.

I hear you.

- All of us, students, faculty, and staff, are all carrying our different experiences with the pandemic. We have different levels of comfort, anxiety, and loss. We have different ideas and expectations of our new normal.
- I acknowledge how difficult it is to be transitioning back to in person events, classes, and meetings. It is exhausting I hear you say in a common refrain. In the classroom, all the previous pedagogical worries are there, and new worries have arrived, are my students wearing masks? Are any of them sick? Are they vaccinated? How many are out today? How will I get them the content? How can I reasonably educate students who must be out of the classroom without having to offer two different pedagogical structures and doing twice the effort? I trust that each of you knows how to answer that question in your own classroom.
- I believe that we will continue to have these struggles until we come to a better understanding for the classroom that works both for students and for faculty. I have especially been hearing

from those with large classes (over 100 students) that new guidance on missed work is difficult to implement. If you have any insights or experiences to share, please contact me, or the co-chairs of the Faculty Affairs Committee, they are working to examine this issue for the spring term.

Acting in Good Faith

- I have been away from the detailed mechanisms of the Senate for two years. Some aspects of my return have been very familiar, working with the officers and administrators, the schedules of meetings, the rhythm of the academic year.
- I have attended all the Senate Committee meetings scheduled this month, the first ones of the academic year. I find the different cultures of the committees that are cultivated by the chairs fascinating. The committee chairs and the officers will be meeting next Friday, October 15th for an Expanded Executive Committee meeting where we will discuss their priorities. Thank you to all committee chairs and members for their service to the Senate.
- Some aspects of my return have surprised me, beyond our normal operating mechanisms, we are dealing with a return to classrooms after a mostly remote teaching year, the Delta surge (which may be abating), and a new general level of anxiety.
- In some areas and interactions, I have found a level of pessimism and cynicism that concerns me. To be fair, there are always pessimists and cynics to be found almost anywhere. However, our shared governance system at Pitt largely depends on good faith and fair dealing interactions. I am not a lawyer, but these tenets are basic, and underpin contracts and many formal interactions between parties. Of course, there is a spectrum of interpretation as to what constitutes good faith and fair dealing, and I have found that misinterpretation and innuendo of lack of good faith can cause ill will and misinformation.
- I ask that we examine ourselves and recommit to future good faith interactions, this is how I move about my Senate work, I must assume best intentions and good faith. No matter how strongly I hold it, my opinion of a matter is not the only one to be considered. I refuse to allow the cynicism to affect my pursuit of the ideals of our work, educating our students, bettering the world, and sharing the work of governing Pitt.

Vaccine Requirement

- As the Chancellor mentioned at our last Senate Council meeting, there are distinct groups being formed to examine and recommend the consequences related to a COVID-19 vaccine requirement. I am part of a group organized by the Provost to examine the possible consequences for faculty of noncompliance. I know how our executive committee feels about a vaccine requirement for public health and what we would recommend in relation to consequences. Please let me know your thinking on this matter, either privately or now in discussion.
- I am glad of this movement towards a requirement. As of this morning, the overall number for vaccination at Pitt is 92%.

Budget Model ReSTART

- The new proposed Budget Model has been approved by the members of the Steering Committee. The chairs are drafting a letter, summary, and presentation for the Chancellor. I

believe it will be presented sometime in the next few weeks. Assuming approval, the new budget model is to be run parallel to the current budget later this year.

- There was a discussion of the Steering Committee on shared governance in the budget decision making process. Myself, Chris Bonneau, and the Budget Policies Committee member representative Gary Hollibaugh, were present. I believe there will be more budget transparency for various groups under the new model, more roles for faculty representation including senate committee representation, it keeps faculty and staff involvement the same in the UPBC, with new involvement in space management.
- The Budget Policies Committee will be discussing the budget model governance structures, including the PBS (Planning and Budget System), that will need to be updated at their 10/22 meeting.

Resilience Steering Committee

- This group is meeting biweekly. This committee is mostly information sharing on the status of each campus in regard to COVID-19 cases, noncompliance of mandatory testing and related matters but can take feedback and comments to the Healthcare Advisory Group and the CMRO.
- This meeting brings it home to me how much work we are all doing to keep our Pitt community safe and healthy, and how many committed people it takes to make things happen in an institution our size.

Policy Work

- A Policy initiative to draft a new University Policy on Institutional Conflict of Interest ("ICOI"). Research Committee Co-chair Shilpa Sant will serve on this policy charter committee. After the draft is completed, the Senate Research Committee is the one that will review this policy before it comes to Assembly and Council.
- Faculty Affairs examined and gave feedback for the new Protection of Children policy and procedure. This will now move to Benefits and Welfare for feedback.

Academic Searches

- The Provost's office is running a search for the next Director of UCSUR. The Senate Office is running an election for two candidates from those faculty affiliated with UCSUR. UCSUR search that the Senate is running has 5 candidates:
 - Annette Dabbs – Nursing
 - Michael Glass – Urban Studies
 - Leah Jacobs – Social Work
 - Mary Marazita – Dental Medicine
- Elections will run Oct. 15-21. The voters are those same faculty affiliated with UCSUR.

Other

- Kris Kanthak and I have been meeting with the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Penn State and Temple, our state related cousins.
- Take a moment to check out the recognition of the Divine 9 near the union.

- Pitt's 2022 Middle States accreditation process is under way, and the steering committee leading the process seeks input from the Pitt community about who we are and where we're headed. Share your thoughts by Oct. 15.
https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9RfjVv0lZAKAfz0
- Born out of the grief of the Tree of Life massacre is the inaugural Eradicate Hate Global Summit 2021. The summit is being held here in Pittsburgh from October 18-20. You can attend in person at the convention center or view live streaming of some of the programming.

T AFC Resolution

Abbe de Vallejo, co-chair of Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee will speak to the resolution. You received an updated version this morning.

Formation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Dependent Care

- The Executive Committee and I bring the creation of an ad hoc committee for dependent care for a vote. This ad hoc committee will be looking at different aspects of dependent care, including childcare and elder care, in relation to existing Pitt policies and potential benefits. I believe that policy change can promote retention, scholarly productivity, diversity, and inclusion.
- I think that focusing a committee with the purpose to act, benchmark, review, and recommend will be beneficial for these issues.
- I have identified a chair for this work, Anna Wang-Erickson. Anna is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Associate Director, Institute for Infection, Inflammation, and Immunity in Children (i4Kids), a joint research effort between Pitt and UPMC. Besides her many other accomplishments, she received a 2020-23 Pitt Seed Grant related to dependent care support.
- We are still formalizing the other members of the committee to include faculty, staff, administrators, and postdocs.

Related:

- There is continued work on these issues from our HR and Business and Operations areas, which I am thankful for. Care.com is a new emergency care benefit available to full-time faculty, staff, and postdocs. This benefit brings a total of 10 available backup care days for child and adult care per program year to be used for work-related purposes, and tuition discounts on tutoring and local and national childcare centers. <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/current-employees/work-life-balance/caring-family/carecom>

President Kear concluded her report – no questions

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

T AFC – Co-Chair Abbe DeVallejo

This resolution is in response to the November 2020 Faculty Assembly meeting where there was discussion of the merits as to whether a preferred Journal's list is the way to go when it comes to evaluating faculty scholarly activity. T AFC has been looking into this for the past two years. The bottom

line, we don't think the use of such a tool is advisable for measuring faculty productivity. Individually units, determine criteria for tenure promotion and retention, according to their missions and that we expect that these criteria are applied equitably to the faculty. This is irrespective of the appointment, whether you're tenure track or appointment stream. The tenor of the resolution is one that applies to all types of appointments.

Salcido – I generally agree with this. Is there a need for a specific definition of preferred journals in this resolution?

Reed – I would be very concerned about having a preferred journals list that I would have to publish in. Citations is always the metric that ought to be looked at in terms of how a person is performing.

Frieze – What about prohibiting certain types of research?

Kovacs – I think that is a different issue. The preferred journals list has come to TAFC from a specific faculty member.

Frieze – You may want to consider this as a future item.

Collister – I fully support this resolution. I often see a preferred journal list is often used, but you could use metrics in place of preferred journal lists.

Kanthak read questions from the chat – Can the list be developed by a team of faculty as opposed by the chair?

The Business School has a preferred list and it seems to be accepted and meets the needs of the school and faculty knowing nothing is perfect, was this benchmarked by the committee?

DeVallejo- Those are all valid points. The bottom line, whatever metric is used that it's equitable, because what concerned us was that we became aware that a preferred list was used in annual evaluations, but not in recommendations for tenure promotion or retention.

Bonneau: Gave an overview – this came out because there was a complaint brought to TAFC regarding the existence of such a list. TAFC did an investigation – the list was developed by consulting faculty but a couple of things – faculty change over time, disciplines change over time even if all the current faculty agree on a list, it can shape future hiring and future program decisions in a way that stifles innovation, creativity and in fact may have harmful, long term consequences. We know these preferred journal lists exist in some areas and this is an area that is hurting faculty who don't publish in those areas in some cases because their area of research doesn't have any journals in this list.

I. Murtazashvili – A well designed preferred journals list would be useful. Why rule out all preferred journal lists?

Kovacs: It still leaves out the needs of individuals who might be either invoking an esoteric area within an area or that just doesn't jive with the mainstream is why we thought it would be best to not have a list.

Morel – We all know in our own fields what journals we all want to publish in. Is this a widespread issue or one that is happening in a particular unit?

Tokowicz -I agree with Chris's comments and think this is important to pass the resolution. These lists could possibly be used very well but could also be used for not good purposes.

Bickford – Do we know how widespread this practice is? Is it more than one case?

DeVallejo – We don't know, we only looked at one complaint. Suggested including the word "formal" in front of the preferred journal list.

Covington-Ward – Supports the resolution. Thinks that some junior faculty may not feel comfortable speaking their mind

Guterman- Who determines what is on the preferred list and doesn't it get reviewed periodically?

Kovacs- Typically the Dean decides. They're not only use for promotion and tenure, but they're also being used as a system of rewards, like if people published in the preferred journals, they would get certain time off during the summer, or they wouldn't have to teach something to that effect.

Kear – called for a vote with the change to include the word “formal” in front of each place that says preferred journal list.

Resolution passed – 45 yes’s, 2 No’s, 0 abstentions

6. Unfinished Business and /or New Business

Kear – Ad hoc committee for dependent care

I want to form an ad hoc committee for dependent care, it has support from the Executive committee. If approved, it will go to Senate Council next week. This ad hoc committee will be looking at different aspects of dependent care, including childcare and elder care, in relation to existing Pitt policies and potential benefits.

I believe that policy change here can promote retention of faculty and postdocs and also improve our efforts in diversity and inclusion. I have identified a chair – Anna Wang-Erickson, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. We are still forming the committee, but it would include, faculty, staff, students, post docs and administrators. Any questions?

Rauktis – When I was on PACWC, we looked into older adult care about six years ago, but it didn’t get much traction. I will get materials to you. I think it hit a wall, but the research was clear that we are losing middle age women who have to pull out of the workforce to take care of a parent or spouse.

Frieze- This is an issue that has been worked on many times over many years. It’s very expensive care. Where is the money going to come from? I will look into my files for background information.

Tashbook – mentioned care.com which Pitt allows 10 emergency back-up care days for parents or child care.

Kear -called the vote – passed, 45 yes’s, 0 no’s, 0 abstentions

United Way – Adam Baron gave a brief overview about the United Way/Pitt Campaign

Our campaign goal this year is \$750,000. Pitt is a great partner and we are excited to move forward. You can direct your gift to specific agencies you are passionate about or to the impact fund. We encourage you to participate and thank you for all you have done and are doing.

Kelly Gilliam, manages Pitt United Way Campaign. It’s easy to give, you can find it at my.pitt.edu

If you used payroll deduction last year, we now have the roll-over campaign where what you gave last year will be rolled over to the same groups and amounts as the previous year. If you want to make any changes from last year, you have until Dec. 13.

Kear – endorsed the United Way and encouraged faculty to give.

7. Announcements

Salcido mentioned that he is the Pitt faculty representative for the City of Pittsburgh Oakland Neighborhood plan as well as a resident of South Oakland. Working on a 10 year plan for Oakland. Please use your voice and visit the site and give feedback <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/oakland>

Meeting was adjourned at 4:27 pm.

Documents from the meeting are available at the University Senate website:

<http://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/faculty-assembly>

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Molinaro

University Senate Director

Members attending:

Almarza, Anderson, Archibald, Bickford, Bircher, Bonneau, Brodt, Buchanich, Bungler, Burton, Collister, Covington-Ward, Damiani, Darnell, Denman, De Vallejo, Falcione, Frieze, Glynn, Guterman, R. Jones, Kanthak, Kear, Kiesling, Klem, Kohanbash, Kovacs, Kregg-Byers, Mahboobin, Massanelli, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, I. Murtazashvili, Newman, Nguyen, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Potoski, Rauktis, Reed, Roberts, Salcido, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Songer, Stoner, Streeter, Taboas, Tashbook, Tokowicz, Vento, Wiggins, Wood, Yates

Members not attending:

Bench, Hall, Henker, Jeffrey, Jeong, A. Jones, Judd, Kiselyov, Kory, Labrinidis, Maier, Mulcahy, J. Murtazashvili, Oyler, Swigonova, Triplette, Tudorascu, Yearwood

*Excused attendance:

Bove, Conley, Fort, Lewin, Sant, Zack

Others attending:

Baron, Cardilli, Gilliam, Harrell, Jones, Manges, Mucklo, SantaCasa, Wallace, Wilson, Yates

*Notified Senate Office