

Senate Council Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom

Thursday, September 17th, 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 June 11, 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 welcoming back everyone on the first meeting in the new academic year. He thanked faculty for their input and work during summer to put all the health programs in action. He reiterated that our operational model was based on agility, flexibility and medical advice. We have already seen the benefits of our flex model. Then, he asked Elise Martin from CMRO to update the audience on the data they are collecting. She said that testing and social distancing is observed; therefore the prevalence of COVID, confirmed by the random testing, is still low at 0.3%. For those infected, the University offers isolation for students living on and off campus. The data proves that students who tested positive are mostly undergraduates living off campus. Contact tracing shows that new cases are not associated with big gatherings. Chancellor Gallagher thanked students for their compliance with our health guidance by wearing masks and social distancing themselves. Dean Bonner echoed the Chancellor statement about students' compliance. We are still in Elevated Risk posture in Oakland, but the situation is evaluated every week. If a decision is made to relax the current posture, it will take effect one week after the announcement is made. Provost Cudd remarked on faculty involvement in the Flex@Pitt success

Chancellor turned his attention to non-COVID related news and announcements, such as Hispanic Heritage Month, A Year of Engagement and the most recent changes in administration, which happened over the summer. New appointments: Carissa Shively Slotterback – Dean of GSPIA; Clyde Wilson Pickett - VC for Diversity and Inclusion; John Wallace – Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development; Lu-in Wang – Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Amanda Godley – Vice Provost for Graduate Studies; Anantha Shekhar – SVC for Health Sciences and Medical School Dean.

Gallagher ended his report by talking about the budget and planning related issues. He said that we would be in the new plan, but we gave ourselves an extra year to address the big issues and re-involve ourselves with the next Plan for Pitt. The worst-case scenario for our budget based on assumptions that all revenue sources would be disrupted, did not materialize: the state passed the 4-year appropriation, the students returned at the similar numbers, the research funding increased (especially for COVID research). Though shifting operations due to the COVID had significant costs to us and the Commonwealth situation is bad, the disruptions seen elsewhere in higher education did not have a visible effect on Pitt this year, but next academic year could be different.

5. Senate President, Chris Bonneau

Bonneau reported that unlike previous year when we took the summer break, this year Faculty Assembly was active all through summer. Most of the committees were also working. And he thanked all the faculty for their involvement and work over the summer. The biggest issue currently on our next agenda is the IP Policy revision, which is being worked on right now and would come for our consideration and vote in October. Bonneau said that he was very satisfied that the University avoided outbreaks that happened in other universities. And he thanked everyone for their compliance with the health guidelines.

6. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

a. Student Government Board (SGB), Eric Macadangdang

Macadangdang expressed the same gratitude to students for their resilience and flexibility that was voiced by the previous speakers. He said that all SGB programming will remain remote for this semester. SGB passed the bill called "Comprehensive governing code revision". Activity fee was reduced by 20% this semester for all students. SGB will continue to support the following services: free NYT access, legal counsel, access to locker rooms and office space for student organizations, as well as emergency fund. SGB also issued a statement to address the continued protests to show our support for BLM and highlight the need for systemic changes. Despite some existing barriers for organizations this year, the number of received applications for SGB positions shows that students want to get involved. Their flagship programs are in works: civic engagement, fall safety fair and mental health week. Then he briefly talked about committees and taskforces focusing on specific areas, such as voting in general election and LGBTQ+ resources on safety. SGB rolled out student leader database and initiative on civic engagement (related to the Year of Engagement). SGB stays busy and active to address undergraduate student's needs and issues.

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

No report

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

Hirsch talked about work done by the organization grouped under three themes: COVID, Diversity,

Equity and Inclusion and efforts to build a community of graduates in our unique environment.

Because of overwhelming information, they created additional communication channel (COVID-19 tab) to provide pandemic related information tailored to graduate and professional students. In terms of DEI, they want to make sure that the conversations started by the momentum of BLM are still going on, and to stay committed to allyship and advocacy of BIPOC students. Pan-African Graduate and Professional Student Union was reinstated, so they look forward to working with them. They also facilitate open conversations with the assembly board members to identify gaps, learn the needs and address them. They are working on with Dr. Godley to have a town hall specifically tailored for graduate and professional students. Trivia Night is coming. It should be a fun event. GPSG it also engaged in making sure that students know their voting rights, are registered, etc. They have the budget for this year allocated.

Chancellor Gallagher thanked both student organizations for helping to tailor information for specific populations, and admitted that the University administration had troubles with it. He also reminded the need for knowing the do's and don'ts related to the upcoming election. Geovette Washington added that they are in process of preparing the do's and don'ts to be published in the website.

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

Good afternoon Senate Council members, hopefully everyone has been well during these past few months. The Postdoc Association has been especially busy recently and have made a successful transition to hosting almost all of our programming virtually. First, I would like to highlight our recent collaboration with UCIS, OIS, and ODI. We are working to create a short video and resource list for international postdocs on the topic of racism and Black America history. This video will be shown at orientation for international postdocs to raise understanding on Black American History and racism in the US. We hope to have this resource active for next year.

Next week is National Postdoc Appreciation Week. UPPDA is hosting several events throughout the week starting with an outdoor yoga session on Monday, communicating science training program on Thursday, and our Annual Postdoc Retreat and Town Hall on Friday. If you work with any postdocs, please let them know about Postdoc Appreciation Week and we hope to see them at some of the programming we have next week.

Lastly, UPPDA is working with the University-wide committee on Hispanic Heritage Month. We will be hosting a viewing of the film, Under the Same Moon, which tells the story of Carlitos who crosses the Mexican-American border in hopes of finding his mother working in the US. We hope that some of you will be able to join us at that viewing at the end of September.

Good to see everyone again and look forward to the rest of our meetings! That concludes my report.

8. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Andy Stephany (submitted in writing)

President Bonneau, Chancellor Gallagher, members of Senate Council:

-Our general membership met yesterday, as we have throughout the summer, with over 100 Staff Council members and individuals from the community. Dave DeJong and Mark Burdsall were guest speakers and updated us on campus security protocols, the safety concierge program, as well as supervisor training and performance evaluations. I want to acknowledge all of our Staff Council members who, despite priorities lying elsewhere and distractions otherwise, have remained committed to our mission and continue to advocate and serve staff, in addition to serving the institution in an exceedingly impressive manner.

-During the meeting, we acknowledged the hundreds of staff retiring at the end of the month – thanking them for their years of service, dedication, and mentorship. I know of several retirees who have impacted me directly and I want to thank them all for their mentorship and guidance. I want Staff Council to also be a contact and resource for individuals whose workload and tasks will be significantly impacted by the voids left from those retiring. While acknowledging that the retirement program is a cost-savings measure, it is also an opportunity for remaining staff to take a step forward in their careers here at the University and I'm excited for that.

*-Staff Council is hosting a **Staff Council Conversations: Staying Motivated During Challenging Times** on Tuesday, October 6 at noon. It's critical to stay grounded and for everyone to know that you're not in this alone. Registration details can be found on calendar.pitt.edu.*

-Staff Council is looking to build a group around campus who are committed to making Pitt the most welcoming place it can be – we want to help make Pitt staff jobs more accessible to Black, Hispanic, and under-represented minorities in the Pittsburgh community. We acknowledge that we can't do this alone or overnight, and we're excited to build a coalition to build a pipeline of local talent. As our jobs become much more professional and technical, early exposure and training to the work we do here on campus is important to driving interest. Please reach out to me at ars70@pitt.edu or staffcouncil@pitt.edu if you're interested in joining us.

-Staff Council is always available for questions, comments, and concerns from staff and the University community. Please email staffcouncil@pitt.edu. We want to hear from you.

-Our next meeting is Wednesday, October 21 at noon on Zoom. Register to attend on calendar.pitt.edu to submit your interest in tuning in and we'll share the password.

This concludes my report.

Gallagher added that retirement programs mentioned by Stephany in his report, were part of the cost saving measures: VERP (for faculty) and SERP (for staff)

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

There were no other reports.

10. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

There was no unfinished business.

11. Announcements

No announcements

12. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:55 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, Bonneau, Bonner, Brodt, Cilli, Cousins, Cudd, de Vallejo, Doty, Fort, Gallagher, Gau, Goundappa, Hirsch, K. Humphrey, Jeong, Judd, Kieselyov, Kiesling, King, Kleebank, Klem, Kohanbash, Macadangdang, Molinaro, Mulvaney, Murtazashvili, Poljak, Roberts, Rutenbar, Salcido, Scott, Shekhar, Stephany, Swigonova, Vilijaste, Washington, Wilson, Wood, Yates

Members not attending:

Abubaker, Aziz, Bratman, Bunger, Gregerson, Henker, C. Humphrey, Jones, Kanthak, Khan, Kory, Lucan, Mostern, Mulcahy, Munro, Nelson, Popovich, Potoski, Rauktis, Sukits

*Excused attendance:

Hall, Landsittel, Loughlin, Sastry, Vento

Others attending:

Ayers, Buchanich, Corn, DeJong, Dostilio, Harding, Harrell, Hitter, Houser, Johnson, Jones, Kregg-Byers, Lalo, Leifson, Manfredi, Martin, McMahon, Moran, Pelt, Pickett, Seldin, Staresinic, Todd, Toner, Turner, Walker

*Notified Senate Office