

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes  
(Hybrid format)  
Thursday, September 15, 2022**

**I. Call to Order**

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and asked those on zoom whose names do not appear on screen to use chat for the roll.

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

On a motion (Chancellor Gallagher) duly made and seconded (Kanthak) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on May 19 2022 were approved as written.

**III. Items of New Business**

No items of new business were raised.

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

The Chancellor opened his remarks by wishing everyone a Happy new year, and the hope that the summer was fulfilling with a chance to recharge and reset.

Unlike previous meetings he will not be covering COVID as Joe Suyama, the CMRO head, will be speaking on this later.

The Chancellor expressed his thanks to everyone involved in a successful 2022 arrival. It was very smooth, with many volunteers from entire campus helping 8000 people move in. The Chancellor that it was gratified to see the cheerful students with their parents and was surprised that there were none of the expected traffic jams. He also voiced his appreciation and thanks for the partnership with Carlow University to house 130 Pitt students

The Chancellor welcomed a number of new faces among the academic faculty:

- In the School of dental medicine Dean Costello has stepped down following his new appointment as Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Integration. Marnie Oakley has been appointed interim dean. She is a longstanding Pitt faculty member. A new national search for a new dean will be starting soon
- Jimmy Martin stepped down as Dean of the Swanson School of Engineering in late August to become Vice Chancellor for STEM research and innovation in the Office of Research with Rob Rutenbar. Sanjeev Shroff is the new interim dean of the Swanson School. He is a distinguished scholar working in cardiovascular physiology and bioengineering.

The Chancellor welcomed Dean Oakley and Dean Shroff to their new positions.

Several national searches have been successfully concluded since the last meeting:

- Gene Anderson was named the Henry E. Haller Jr. Dean of the Joseph M Katz Graduate School of Business. His start date was August 1. He is a seasoned administrator and has
- School of Pharmacy Amt Seybert is the new dean. She is a familiar face; she has chaired the department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics for the last 12 years.
- Christine Casper has been named the new Dean of the School of Nursing after Dean Jacqueline Dunbar-Jacob stepped down following 20 years of service. Dean Casper is currently Dean of U of New Mexico's College of Nursing.

- Rick Esch has been serving in the role of both the University of Pittsburgh Titusville and Bradford campuses has been officially named as President of these two campuses. He replaces Catherine Koverola who is serving as Interim Director of the Center for African Studies at USIS

The Chancellor congratulated the individuals for taking on these roles, and also extended his warm thanks to all those who participated in the search committees. It is a team effort and he expressed his gratitude for the deliberate and serious commitment of all those involved in these searches.

The one search he did not mention was the one underway to replace him, but he stated that the Board of Trustees will have more information about this very shortly. Faculty elections are under way.

Four Pitt undergrads were awarded inaugural Voyager scholarships also known as the Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service This was created by the Obamas and Brian Chesky, Airbnb CEO, to develop young leaders in public service. It provides \$50,000 in direct support to help alleviate student debt. It provides a stipend and free housing to pursue summer work-travel experiences between their junior and senior years. After graduation recipients receive \$2000 in travel support every year for 10 years to cover travel to continue to broaden their horizons. The Chancellor congratulated the recipients and expressed that this was a great opportunity which included the added perk of meeting with the former President.

The Chancellor described a recent event when he was joined by Governor Wolf, SVC Shekhar to celebrate a new partnership with the company ElevateBio and announce the creation of the Pitt BioForge BioManufacturing Center at Hazelwood Green to Accelerate Cell and Gene Therapy Innovation. This is the continuation of the idea that U Pitt creates a commercial life sciences corridor to help our scientists to commercialize their research. The result of these discussions was a large grant from the Richard K Mellon Foundation, and this was the largest grant in this Foundation's history. ElevateBio will partner with Pitt to create facilities that can be used for the biomanufacturing, at clinical quality, of products needed for gene and cellular therapies. The Governor had provided some support and came to participate in the event. This event was noticed nationally and is a testament to the fact that Pitt is gaining recognition as a life sciences destination. These partnerships and events are important and help Pitt and the region get noticed as a big player in this area.

The Chancellor noted that Homecoming is around the corner. The Pitt Alumni Association is organizing many events for this period which is October 6-9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. All alumni are welcome and all current students are encouraged to attend these homecoming events

Finally, the Chancellor noted that we recently celebrated one of our alumni, David Frederick and his wife Sophie to thank them for a multi-million dollar gift to the Honors College. The donation was large enough to warrant the naming of the Honors College and thus the Honors College will be known as the David C. Frederick Honors College. Mr. Frederick is an alumnus of the Honors College and was Pitt's first Rhodes scholar. He has had a very successful career as a lawyer focusing on appellate litigation and has argued many cases before the Supreme Court. He has always come back to Pitt, interacted with students and provided mentoring. He also recently joined the board of trustees and will be at his first meeting next week.

There were no questions for Chancellor Gallagher.

## **V. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear** *(submitted in writing)*

Welcome to our new Faculty Assembly Members and our new Senate Committee members, chairs, and co-chairs. Welcome back to our veteran members.

Last May seems so long ago, and here we are again already. It seemed to me that most faculty did take an actual break of some sort this summer, at least the volume of my email was down. I also took a trip, went to a conference in Ireland, and came back with a positive COVID test. I suspect some variation of this story has happened to others this summer. I am not blaming Ireland, it is a lovely, wonderful place.

I have many items to update you on. First, you see our new Senate officer, our new Secretary Penny Morel. The officers and I held our annual transition meeting in June and continued working on various items over the summer.

This year we are going to keep the hybrid option for Faculty Assembly and Senate Council, but we sincerely hope that more of you will return to in-person attendance. We miss seeing you and miss the personal connections that come with in-person interaction. However, we do want to keep the hybrid option to keep meetings accessible to those that need it. We would appreciate if you try and use the Zoom option only if necessary. We will be disabling the Chat function for meetings, please raise your hand if you want to contribute. We will be asking anyone presenting information to Assembly or Council to do so in person.

### Moving back to “normal” for missed classes

- Let’s have patience and compassion as we continue to calibrate.
- Please make clear to students how to make up work.
- Expectations should be clear, we are moving back to pre-pandemic expectations for missing a few classes due to illness (including other illnesses or physical injuries)
- Not required to offer Zoom links to classes, focusing on in-person learning

### Response to the Budget Policies Committee Resolution from March

- The PBC Guidance Memo was sent to Deans/RC heads on August 11<sup>th</sup>. It was discussed at the annual Deans retreat before the start of the term. The goal of the memo is to strengthen the existing PBC structure and hold deans accountable for the functioning of PBCs in their units. Functioning, healthier unit level PBCs with elected and appointed membership are integral to the success of this new budget model.
- PBCs can expect access to their unit’s budget target letter, their unit’s subvention levels, and an invitation to the first annual orientation for PBC members held by the CFO’s office.
- The PBC Guidance Memo is located on the Budget ReStart SharePoint site maintained by the CFO’s office. <https://pitt.sharepoint.com/sites/cfo>

### Reproductive Rights and Information

- The landscape in reproductive rights has shifted dramatically this summer. As I informed you in July (my only email to the Assembly this summer as I really did not want to bother you), I signed onto a letter from our student government board Presidents asking Pitt’s administration for more support around reproductive rights for students. There was meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> between the students, myself, and student affairs representation, Kenyon Bonner and Carla Panzella.

- Student Affairs will be highlighting opportunities available to all students in the areas of medical care, emotional care, and Jay Darr has shared wellness resources with students at the start of the term, including a webpage related to reproductive health resources.
- If you are interested in these issues, I recommend following the Center for Innovative Research on Gender Health Equity, also known as CONVERGE@Pitt, is holding several fall events with information and discussion in this area. I watched the first Grand Rounds of the academic year yesterday. There are also related events in the Humanities Center this fall.

#### New item: Ombuds Office Support

- The Senate Officers wrote a letter of support on behalf of the Senate for the creation of an Ombuds Office, an effort being led by the Provost's office and OEDI.
- There have been requests over the years from members of the Assembly for a more robust ombuds presence for faculty and staff.
- This potential office would be a centralized office for faculty, students, and staff.

#### Faculty Representation on Chancellor Search Committee

- I received the Correspondence from the Chair of the Board of Trustees that requested 5 faculty members for the Chancellor's Search Committee on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. This activated our Senate response and gave us a deadline of Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>. The Officers met on August 5<sup>th</sup> and set out the timeline.
- We use the spirit of the nominating committees contained in the approved [Guidelines for Search Committees for Senior Administrators](#) (on senate website) and we utilize the processes outlined.
- There were various communications to faculty to nominate or self-nominate and on Sept. 6 faculty who are eligible to vote received a link directly in their email alerting them to the election they are eligible to participate in. **Please vote.** The deadline is 11:59 pm tonight.
- Due to a job classification coding change this July for 200 faculty primarily in the A&S school and a few faculty in SCI & Social Work, these faculty did not receive the email with the ballot for the Chancellor Search Committee. Once this was brought to our attention, we made the adjustments and people received their correct ballots.
- We also selected a nominating committee consisting of 5 members of Senate Council from each respective area, and appointed Vice President Kris Kanthak chair of the nominating committee. The members of the nominating committee were Doug Reed (Medicine), Juan Taboas (Health Sciences Schools), Linda Tashbook (Prof. Schools), Geoff Wood (Regionals), and Gabby Yearwood (A&S). They worked in the spirit of the guidelines with the responses to the call for nominees/self-nominees and with their own nominations and recruiting. A big thank you to them for their work. Their final slates went out on Aug. 24.
- There is an incredible amount of administrative behind the scenes work that is done by Lori Molinaro and Linda SantaCasa to make this process work. Thank you.
- I know the first email went out in late summer, and I also know that we had a tight, inflexible deadline, so I thank you for your understanding.

#### Technical Fixes for Summer Access to Services by Part-Time Faculty

- Issues were brought to me this summer by faculty about summer access to services by part-time faculty on renewable contracts, and those with new contracts, and I have heard of previous concerns on these same questions.
- Pitt IT is working with Panther Central and HR on a technical fix between Pitt systems that will provide a grace period for employment data in the Pitt ID Center (Panther Central) from the end of a contract date. The grace period will be 155 days. This means that existing part-time faculty that are on renewable contracts from spring to fall will not see any loss of services that flow from Panther Central data, including Library Account and PRT Bus Pass. This means regardless of when HR Shared Services finishes renewing a part-time contract before the start of the fall term, these services and any services tied to ID access will not be interrupted.
- Pitt IT is working with Panther Central and HR on a technical fix between Pitt systems that will improve access for those with new contracts and their ability to receive an ID from the Pitt ID Center (Panther Central) and be able to access the services that flow from Panther Central data, including the Library Account and Bus Pass.
- Dwight Helfrich and his team in Pitt IT will be working on these technical fixes with a projected completion date of April 30, 2023. We are in continuing conversation as they look into the systems for the best solutions.

#### Policy Updates

In June, the Chancellor approved [Policy RI 11, Institutional Conflict of Interest](#)

#### Invitation

Rebecca Keiser, (Chief of Research Security Strategy and Policy, National Science Foundation), is visiting Pitt on October 10. She is a national leader in evolving research security practices. While the Research and TAFC Committees have been invited specifically, any Faculty Assembly member is invited to attend these three meetings, all in William Pitt Union, Lower Lounge.

- 10-10:50 AM: *Meeting with University Senate*. During this forum, Dr. Keiser will address concerns about the impact of new research security requirements on academic freedom and international collaborations. This will be an open discussion and not a formal presentation. All University Senate members are welcome to participate.
- 11-11:50 AM: *The China Initiative: A Discussion of Lessons Learned by the Government*. The China Initiative was an effort by the United States Department of Justice to identify and prosecute those who inappropriately transferred American intellectual property and technology to China. Launched in November 2018, the initiative was intended to combat economic espionage. However, it was criticized as ineffective, racially biased, and inconsistent. The Department of Justice announced the end of the program on February 23, 2022, amid criticism of unfair treatment of Chinese Americans and residents of Chinese origin. During this forum, Dr. Keiser will solicit feedback on the China Initiative, its impact on academia, and lessons learned that will shape future research security policies and regulations.
- 12-1 PM: *Public Seminar, Research Security: Past, Present and Future*. All University Members are invited to this session.
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She concluded her report with invitation for comment and questions.

No questions.

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

### **A. Student Government Board (SGB), Danielle Floyd (submitted in writing)**

- Good Afternoon everyone!
  - Thank you so much for having us today, we are so happy to be here to represent undergraduates through the Student Government Board.
  
- While the Student Government Board was not in session over the summer, our Board Members and Committee Chairs worked hard to plan and prepare for the school year.
  - Over the summer, SGB released a statement about the...
    - Mass Shootings that happened in Dallas, Buffalo, Irvine, and Uvalde. As students who have grown up with lockdown drills, we know that this issue is neither distant nor rare. It is real, and we stand in support with students and all those affected. In the letter, we called on students to contact their elected officials and tell them why gun reform matters to them..
    - We also co-authored a letter with the College of General Studies Student Government, Graduate & Professional Student Government which was sponsored by the University Senate, about the recent Supreme Court decision overturning the landmark decision made in Roe v. Wade, thereby destroying the right to an abortion and leaving it in the hands of each state. Over the summer, we met with admin within the Division of Student Affairs to engage in a dialogue about the letter.
  - Positions with our organizations
    - Interviews are beginning this weekend for many of our open positions, including our Elections Committee, Judicial Committee, as well as our First-Year Council.
    - We still have applications open for two-first years on Allocation which are due on September 19th, and two-first year spots on our Diversity & Inclusion committee on September 23rd.
    - We also have spots open to hire two Civic Engagement Fellows who will be assisting the office of Pitt Serves.
    - Finally, we will be conducting public interviews for the vacancy we have on the board, where we are encouraging any and all non-cgs undergraduates to come and ask questions of our four top-tier candidates. Interviews will be tomorrow from 3-4:30 pm in WPU 540 for any student interested in stopping by.
  - During Orientation Week, we co-hosted the Student Organization Leadership Conference (formerly known as Panther Gold) along with the Office of Cross-Cultural and Leadership Development within Student Affairs. It was a one-day retreat to bring large student organizations to provide Allocations training, leadership development, and community-building opportunities. We had 100 participants in total join us, where different board members had an opportunity to engage with student leaders from across campus.
    - The SGB and Pitt Program Council hope to follow up on this by hosting a student organization mixer, which will provides students with a forum to continue their conversations about how they could collaborate with each other throughout the year.

- SGB has also created a one-pager of our major initiatives for the year.. For the sake of time I won't go over all of the plans.. but if anyone would like a copy they can grab one here. To highlight a few major initiatives:
  - Over the summer, we met periodically with the other state-related Student Governments (Penn State, Temple, and Lincoln) to discuss ways we can better collaborate to advocate for state funding and increase voter registration on our campus..more to come as we progress through the Fall
  - Funding
    - We submitted a large proposal to higher administration in Student Affairs about 1 or 2 weeks ago with ideas on how to utilize surplus funds from the student activity fee. We're now awaiting a formal response but hopefully it will create space for dialogue that can happen between members of Student Government and Leaders on-campus.'
  - We are also reaching out to organizations through the Fall Semester where we will go into their GBM's or e-board members to learn more about their mission, hear concerns, and provide opportunities for student government to assist their work.
    - SGB will be hosting our first Assembly meeting on Monday. Exciting! We will be meeting every two weeks throughout the year.

#### **Allocations:**

So far, student groups have requested \$44,342.52, of which SGB has been able to approve \$40,532.78. Additionally an email was sent out to all student organizations through the SORC office to participate in Allocation 101 training starting today.

Allocations 101 is an opportunity to meet with the Chairman of the Allocations committee and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the SGB funding process. Consisting of a short slideshow, all undergrads are welcome to attend and ask questions about how their organization can most effectively utilize the Allocations process. Whether they have specific questions about the opportunities Allocations funding can present to their organizations or just want a better understanding of how the student activities fee is distributed, Allocations 101 can satisfy any questions clubs might have.

No questions

#### **College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Monte Labash** **Monte Labash was absent and no report was provided**

#### **B. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSSG), Marlon Brown VP of programming of GPSG**

Current president has resigned and Jordyn Kamasa will be the new president. The organization is working to create an inclusive, fun graduate school culture. The aim is to create a space that graduate students will comfortable coming to seek advice and find like-minded peers.

The first event of the year was held today and it was coffee and chat event created so that students can come in to get to know the organization members and so we can get to know our market.

Inclusivity is a big focus this year and one way to do this it to really get to know our members and show interest in where they are from. This way we can truly understand our student body.

Several additional events are being planned.

- LatinX heritage month is 9/15 -10/15 and we plan to shed light on our LatinX community in the student body and partner with our local business community.
- October is mental health awareness month which is extremely important and several events are being planned.

All of these efforts aim to increase inclusivity and the focus is on creating a welcoming space and for sharing and networking in order to create a healthy graduate student culture.

No questions.

**VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Stephanie Mutchler** (submitted in writing)

Hello Senate Council Members and thank you for once again allowing the postdoctoral community to be represented in these meetings.

We have National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week coming up, starting on Monday. The UPPDA will be

1. Distributing donuts and coffee to postdocs at areas around campus
2. We will also be hosting our annual town hall meeting on Thursday, again holding it in a virtual style this year. Postdocs will be presented with information regarding the UPMC health plan, Life Solutions, and other resources available to them through the OACD, the Provost's Office, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of International Services.

In the year to come, we will be maintaining the work of the previous OACD board by continuing to discuss

1. Fringe benefits
2. Retirement classifications
3. Aligning pay for postdocs with the NIH scale

New goals identified by our board are

1. Trying to understand the greatest concerns and needs of postdocs in a post-Covid environment by administering a university wide survey of postdoctoral scholars and associates
2. Returning to in-person programming to allow for more opportunities for community building and networking amongst our postdocs
3. Advocating that the resources developed during Covid be used to provide a more flexible and inclusive work environment for postdocs and other colleagues to thrive in while maintaining a work-life balance

We look forward to sharing our progress with you over the next year and we welcome any suggestions for things our postdoctoral community can do to give back to the university at large.

The Chancellor reflected on his prior experience in student government as an undergraduate. He was a graduate student and postdoc in large universities and although the experience was good it was an isolating one, and he was not aware of organizations like these that we just heard from. He noted that as he listens to these presentations he wanted to express his appreciation for what is being done to make these graduate student and postdoctoral experiences better.



Brown thanked the Chancellor for sharing his experiences and noted that it is not easy but that he is committed to working on this for the benefit of graduate students.

### VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Lindsay Rodzicz (*submitted in written*)

#### Senate President Kear, Chancellor Gallagher and Members -

1. **Thanks to Angie Coldren** for service to SC and Pitt as for 21 years as SC member, also as committee chair, officer, and most recently SC President. Join us in wishing her well in her new role at Pitt GBG - Director of HR and Title IX liaison.

I am looking forward to working with many of you that I have worked with in the past and to those of you that I have yet to meet, I welcome the opportunity over the next year. I have been a Pitt staff member for over 10 years, working in the Swanson School of Engineering, Department of Engineering in that time. I have previously served SC as both the Executive VP and VP of PR.

#### 2. Welcome back to Fall Semester! **Staff Council has been busy at work over the summer:**

- SC welcomed **14 New Members** bringing total membership to 92.
- Winners this year for the **Professional Development Award: Bianca DeJesus** works in undergraduate studies at the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and the second winner is **Trupti Sarode**, Director of Innovation and Strategy at GSPIA.
- **Staff Council Mentor Award to Derek McDonald**, College of Business “I am extremely honored to receive this award and to be recognized by my peers as someone that can help them get the most out of their careers is humbling”
- Hosted 3 summer **SC Spotlights** topics:
  - First Compensation Modernization on 6/30
  - Second Compensation Modernization Session on 7/27
  - Climate Action 8/19
- Participated in **Pride on the Patio** on 6/23

#### 3. **Highlight: Indigenous People Resolution**, Passed in July

- SC Participating with a Table at the PowWow on 9/21 from 10-6pm at Schenley Plaza
  - Request to **add to academic calendar** - like Constitution Day (Note: not an additional requested day off, for staff an additional personal day can be used, if desired – simply an observance in the University community)
  - Work with community partners – this is being done!
  - Recognize Land: perhaps in the Cathedral might be appropriate with the Nationality Rooms to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples of Western Pennsylvania

#### 4. **Upcoming Events:**

- Next SC Spotlight is October 20 with Michelle Fullem on Enterprise Research
- Participating in the Pitt Safety Fair, October 4 from 11am-1pm
- Socially:
  - Pitt Football Game and Tailgate - Rhode Island, Sept 24 \$15 lower bowl and \$45 for club - Table in Gold Lot
  - Kennywood – Phantom Fall Fest – discounted tickets, link forthcoming for all staff

## **5. SC Committees Are Working On:**

- Lactation Resolution: Updating/expanding work done back in FY2015
- Statement on Reproductive Rights discussed at next General Meeting
- Internally: Working on SC Code of Conduct

**Next SC Open General Meeting in on Wednesday, Sept 21 at 12 noon via Zoom. All are welcome.**

This concludes our report. Thank you.

Streeter: Noted that there is a link on OEDI website that lists indigenous people days – maybe this can be included in the university calendar. She will send the link.

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

### Tuition Exchange Policy

- Professor Sybil Streeter, SAAA Co-Chair

Sybil Streeter presented the new Tuition exchange Policy which was to Senate Council prior to the meeting. The draft policy was presented to SAAA in May by Tyler Tenney, the committee asked for some clarifications concerning existing students in the program. The policy was edited to make it clear that the policy applies to existing and future students in these programs. The SAAA committee approved this policy in June

Streeter noted that this policy does not add any new elements but rather provides clarifications of roles and responsibilities and expanded definitions. The clarifications include:

- that these are not a guaranteed benefit but a scholarship opportunity that can be applied for, and the value and number of these scholarships will be determined by the SVC each year based on budget constraints.
- It clarifies that the Office of Admissions and Financial AID (OAFI) has the authority to administer these scholarships for Pitt students and details are on the OAFI website
- Definitions of eligible employee, export student and import student are expanded.

The policy was presented to Faculty Assembly last week and was approved unanimously. Questions that came included whether or not this change had any tax implications and since these are scholarships and not guaranteed benefits there is no change to the tax status

Rodzwick; On behalf of SC she thanked the committee for the work on the policy. There has been some confusion in the past about this policy and she offered that SC would work with the committee to optimize how information can be transmitted to staff.

Streeter noted that the important thing is to act early as it is freshman centric.

Streeter proposed a motion to vote for approval of this policy

Vote Yes: 39; No: 0; Abstain:3. The policy was approved

## **X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:**

### CMRO Update

- Dr. Joe Suyama, Director of the CMRO

Dr Suyama introduced himself as a faculty member in emergency medicine and his focus is on emergency preparedness. He is taking over from John Williams as head of the CMRO since John Williams asked to step down. However, the CMRO team is still the same and John Williams is serving as a consultant to the team

The goal of the CMRO this year is to transition from response unit to recovery and to shepherd into the next phase and to facilitate the return to business as usual. Covid is still here – nationwide there are 350 deaths/day and 60,000 new infections/day, and so we must take it seriously.

What is really important this year is to go back to “business as usual” and going back to teaching has been a joy. But the concept of business as usual will be different. The CMRO will no longer be posting infection numbers on the dashboard. Numbers don’t tell us as much as how the behaviors have changed. Business as usual means:

- We have masks and we need to use them appropriately
- Normalizing behavior of wearing a mask when you feel you need to
- Stay at home when you are sick – we have hybrid models
- Knowing when to get tested

The other focus is also on promoting personal responsibility and normalizing the wearing of masks when individuals feel it is appropriate.

There was no uptick in infections from backyard brawl which was encouraging and suggests that we are doing well on personal responsibility.

One challenge this year is making sure that incoming freshman get on board with the personal responsibility such that they know when to wear masks, get tested etc. They are new to this environment and will need to receive the appropriate instruction on how to safely navigate campus life. The CMRO is working to help the freshman increase their awareness and developing appropriate personal responsibility.

Questions:

Bonneau: What is the situation regarding isolation beds as Pitt is reducing the number of these to 25 whereas Penn State is increasing them?

Suyama: The CMRO is looking into this and trying to determine what the best number of isolation beds is in regards to the need. The CMRO is monitoring 137 cases right now, 30 are in isolation but not all in isolation housing. It is being actively looked at.

Lam: should we get the new bivalent boosters now or should we wait?

Suyama: Yes, absolutely you should get the bivalent booster as soon as you can. The only people who need to wait are those who had covid within 2 months or got a booster within 2 months. The Pitt hub has a good appointment schedule.

Bonneau: As a follow up to this is it your medical recommendation that to be considered fully vaccinated one should have two shots plus boosters or just the first two shots?

Suyama: CDC guidelines state that receiving the first two shots is considered fully vaccinated but they highly recommend that people get boosters. There are discussions ongoing in light of the new bivalent booster and the recommendation may change in the future.

Floyd asked what students should do if their roommate or floor mate tests positive and they are uncomfortable being in the situation.

Suyama: Student Health services follow up on all positive student to address their medical conditions and also look at close contacts. The medical staff will talk with them about their options come to decisions based on individual circumstances. Usually there are 2 close contacts per student and the isolation housing can be used in these cases.

Rodzwicz had a question about monkeypox, as following the recent email about a student case of monkeypox there were a lot of questions and concerns raised among staff.

Suyama: These are very different types of diseases and monkeypox is not likely to have the same impact on a big University as COVID. Student health services and employee health are taking the lead on this as they have the expertise in this area. It is likely to be more of a one-on-one situation concerning diagnosis and treatment. The CMRO decided to defer to their expertise since they felt this was not in a similar scope from a pandemic perspective.

Gallagher: One commonality is the importance of education. We have become very familiar with covid and we tend to apply the same thing to a new situation. We need to get informed about the risks and disease and there are resources. These are very different conditions, involving different treatments and risk assessments. We will need to make a push on education materials so that we can more accurately plan our response.

Songer: People have been asking why they need to get a booster if they recently had covid, since this was likely the BA-5 variant. Natural immunity is still valuable in these cases.

Suyama: The reason to recommend the booster is that is hard to predict the immunity that is generated from infection because of variations in exposure rates and response whereas the response to vaccine is more standardized. The booster provides a well characterized immunization and the response is predictable. It is known that antibodies following natural infection wane after 4 months or so and that is why it is recommended to wait 2-3 months after infection before getting a booster.

Dressler: In view of the much higher population density on campus compared to Allegheny County does it make sense to follow county transmission levels when issuing masking guidelines? Are there other metrics that are being use to assess risk and make these recommendations?

Suyama: The aim has been to try and set a bar to identify the best practice to allow a return business as usual. We have not identified a better source than the community numbers since our campus is open and we interact with members of the community. It seems that our greatest risk of infection is related to what we do socially in the community at the weekends and we have not seen any risks from being in the classroom. We did not want the classroom to become a source and we are monitoring this and we are just in the first two months. This is a good question and we will be following this.

Gallagher: Following the CDC can be confusing since they change recommendations. They base their recommendations not only on transmission but also other metrics such as hospitalization.

Suyama: At UPMC we are seeing a plateau in number of hospitalizations, since the summer, and it is not going down

Songer: The yo-yoing for CDC and county positions on masking creates confusion and exacerbates reluctance to mask

Suyama: Changing the masking recommendations comes down to a policy decision and a cost benefit analysis by the University based on the risk. Personally, I like to know what the community risk is so that I could change my behavior as needed. It comes down to personal responsibility and being aware of the situation in which we operate.

Kear thanked Joe Suyama for his insights and for all of the questions.

## **XI. Announcements**

None

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14.

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

<https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/senate-council>

Respectfully submitted,  
Penelope (Penny) Morel  
Secretary, University Senate

### Members attending:

Bonneau, Bonner, Buchanich, Burton, Chagantipati, Conley, Cudd, DeJong, Doty, Dressler, Floyd, Gallagher, Gregerson, Kanthak, Kear, Kleebank, Kohanbash, Kovacs, Labrinidis, Lam, Mahboobin, Maier, Massanelli, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Mutchler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Paterson, Reed, Rodzwick, Rutenbar, Sant, Sastry, Schuster, Shafiq, Songer, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Washington, Wood, Yearwood, Zack

### Members not attending:

Archibald, Bench, Cilli, Damiani, Denman, Jones, Kamasa, Lewin, Newman, Oyler, Tudorascu

### \*Excused attendance:

Labash, Nguyen, Shekhar

### Others attending:

Anderson, Ayers, D. Brown, M. Brown, Dostilio, Frieze, Harding, Hitter, Houser, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, LaBar, Lalo, Lancaster, Ledger, McCormick, McCready, Panzella, Pelt, Pickett, Radziwon, Roadman, Salcido, Staresinic, Streeter, Supowitz, Suyama, Tenney, Walker, Washo, Wells, K. Wood

\*Notified Senate Office