

**Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Hybrid
2700 Posvar Hall and Zoom**

Wednesday, September 7, 2022 3 pm

- **Call to Order**

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

- **Approval of the Minutes of the Past Faculty Assembly Meeting**

Kear asked for a motion to approve the minutes. On a motion (Bircher) duly made and seconded (Scott) the minutes of the May 11, 2022 Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved as written.

- **Items of New Business.**

None

- **Report of the Senate President, Robin Kear** (submitted in written form)

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

Related: Joe Suyama, the new head of the CMRO, will be speaking to Senate Council next week on September 15th and will be able to answer questions as well about our current COVID-19 response. (John Williams has moved into a consultancy role.)

Response to the Budget Policies Committee Resolution from March

- The PBC Guidance Memo was sent to Deans/RC heads on August 11th. 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 10th 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.

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 3rd. This activated our Senate response and gave us a deadline of Sept. 16th. The Officers met on August 5th and set out the timeline.
- Although a Chancellor search is mentioned only briefly in this document, and this search is run by the Board of Trustees and is not part of this document, we use the spirit of the nominating committees contained here and we utilize the processes outlined in the approved [Guidelines for Search Committees for Senior Administrators](#). (on senate website)

- We have sent out two read greens related to selecting these 5 faculty for the search committee, available on the Senate homepage.
 - Aug. 9 a Read Green went to eligible faculty asking for nominees/self-nominees by 8/22.
 - Aug. 24 a Read Green went out to eligible faculty announcing the slate of nominees and describing the petition process.
- 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.** Faculty only vote in their respective area. “Approval voting: For each candidate listed you must click either APPROVE or NOT APPROVE in order to submit your ballot. You may select APPROVE for as many candidates as you would like.” Approval voting is more likely to select consensus winners, even when the number of candidates is large.
- 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.

Questions concerning the Chancellor Search Committee

Streeter noted that she did not receive the read green messages about the slate. Molinaro noted this and said she would look into it

Several faculty members (Streeter, Stoner, Denman, McCormick) noted that they had not received the message about the vote. Kear said that the vote email did not come from read green, but came from the University Senate. The subject line was Chancellor Search Committee election and it should have gone to all faculty eligible to vote. The faculty in question confirmed that they had not received this email.

Molinaro said she would work on identifying the problem make sure affected faculty receive the email
Kear noted that voting is open until September 15.

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.

Any questions or comments on my report?

Balaban noted that the Keiser presentation concerns very important areas nationally and internationally and he encouraged all interested parties to attend this session. This will make us much better participants in these areas, which will become important in the next few years.

- **Reports by and Announcements of the Special and Standing Committees of the Senate**

Tuition Exchange Policy

- Professor Sybil Streeter, SAAA Co-Chair

Sybil Streeter presented the new Tuition exchange Policy which was provided to Faculty Assembly 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.

Songer: Does the change in language carry any tax implications for faculty?

Michelle Jackson: It has always been a scholarship opportunity and not a guaranteed benefit and thus there are no changes.

Streeter proposed a motion to vote for approval of this policy

Vote: Yes: 42; No: 0; Abstain: 0. The policy was unanimously improved.

Dependent Care Report

- Professor Anna Wang-Erickson (Assistant professor of pediatrics) Dependent Care Ad-hoc Committee Chair

Wang-Erickson made a power point presentation in which she outlined the work of the Ad-hoc committee on dependent care. This included the following items:

- Members of committee – good representation across many units
- Goals of the committee. The committee views dependent care as central to the university's mission. Other institutions and funding agencies have also taken this view. Funding agencies are increasing financial support for dependent care as they realize it is essential for attracting and retaining faculty in academia – particularly women. Factors to be considered include:
 - a. Support training, scholarship, and research productivity,
 - b. Leverage existing resources at the university
 - c. Alignment with funding priorities
 - d. Focused on laying groundwork for dependent care programs.
 - e. Recommend possible programs
- Actions of the committee
 - a. Recommended reimbursement policy (FN28) be changed to allow reimbursements for dependent care. Pitt was not allowing the use of grant funds for these reimbursements when many outside agencies do allow this.
 - b. Submitted suggested wording modeled on U of CA system wide policy, which allows external and internal finding to be used for dependent care.
 - c. Policy committee has been assembled to review FN28

- d. Office of CFO announced that external funds can be used for dependent care costs in Jan 2022 – This was updated in Aug 2022 and faculty can use external funds, care.com or both. This has been updated on the website. Care.com is set up at Pitt and employees can use up to 10 days/employee/year for work related purposes
- External funds that can be used for dependent care
 - a. Federal funding agencies allow grant funds to be used for additional child care costs incurred when attending project-related conferences and meetings – categorized under travel costs. NIH family friendly FAQ provides important information about this
 - b. Graduate students and postdocs are eligible to receive \$2500 per year for regular child care costs. This is automatic for trainees supported by NIH T32 grants. Applications are necessary for F grant trainees but it is an administrative process.
 - c. Non -federal funds may be available.
- Ongoing discussions
 - a. Recommendations for additional resources that are offered by other universities
 - i. vouchers/subsidies scholarships
 - ii. Professional travel-related costs
 - iii. Lactation and doula support
 - b. Reimbursement using internal funds?

The committee welcomes feedback especially concerning issues with dependent care reimbursements Questions about new problems are also welcome.

Questions from FA:

Jacobs is grateful for all of the work on the demand side but highlighted that there is a lack of supply of available child care in Pittsburgh. UCDC increasing costs 15% making very expensive. Even if reimbursement can be provided a lack of available child care options is a problem.

Wang-Erickson: the committee is aware of the problem. Up to now they have been focused mostly on policy, rather than on increasing capacity. The supply of child care is a real problem, but this committee is not focusing on that.

Stoner: When will the policy be finished?

Wang-Erickson: the policy committee has only met once and the charter only just been finalized with the aim of finishing by March 2023. It is a review of the entire FN28.

Kear: This is a large and broad policy that involves travel and other reimbursements and will go through research, faculty affairs and dependent care committees for approval prior to coming to Faculty Assembly

De Vallejo: Would departments have budgets to cover these costs – and would staff also have access to these benefits?

Wang-Erickson: Yes, we are thinking about staff but first we need the ability to use internal funding for this. The committee is working on how to pay for these and is considering looking to add as fringe benefits. Other schools run these as fringe benefits. For smaller programs that would cover travel related expenses discretionary departmental funds may be used, and this could be relatively inexpensive. The committee is very active in this area and looking at different models for how to pay for

these programs. She noted that it is important to use care.com so that the demand for these benefits can be assessed.

Melnick brought up concerns about care.com and asked whether there is data on the number of unfulfilled requests. She has had two or of four recent requests that were recently unfulfilled at the very last minute.

Kluchurosky: I have been working in HR for many years. We have a dashboard in the use of care.com and I can report that 1400 backup days were used in the first year of care.com which is more than the 450 that was initially predicted. Concerning unfulfilled requests, I do not have that information but I will contact care.com to obtain it

Kear: suggested that Kluchurosky provide the numbers of backup days requested, used and unfulfilled by care.com to the dependent care committee.

Kluchurosky said that she would request this information from care.com.

Target Date Fund

- Professor Linda Tashbook, Benefits & Welfare Chair,
- Timothy Irvin, Senior Financial Advisor CAPTRUST and
- Melissa Kluchurosky, Director of Benefits

Tashbook introduced a new return on investment fund for retirement packages. This is a new target date fund option that will be added to existing retirement options administered through TIAA. This investment fund adjusts with the employee life cycle. She clarified that B&W committee is not asking for a vote on this as these decisions are made by the Benefits office in consultation with the Retirement Oversight Committee and the investment advisor company CAPTRUST. The purpose of this presentation is to provide information for faculty concerning the fund, so that they can provide information to other employees in their units. Lori will circulate list of talking points about new option.

The fund is administered through CAPTRUST and Tashbook introduced Tim Irvin to make the presentation.

The background leading up to this change was provided by Melissa Kluchurosky and Tim Irvin provided more details.

- Retirement plans have been evolving for many years and since 1920 many improvements have been made
- Target date funds are popular for retirees who are concerned about having enough money for retirement. In these funds a desired retirement age is selected along with a risk profile and the investment portfolio adjusts with the employee life cycle. Over a third of Pitt employees use this kind of fund for 100%. But this fund does not include a guaranteed income component.
- The new fund adds a guaranteed component which decreases volatility. The fees are lower than the options through TIAA or Vanguard. Also, a lower cost fixed annuity is an option. This is new product that can be chosen.
- They want to engage faculty and staff to inform them of the benefits of this change. HR worked with benefits oversight committee. The hope is this will be a simple user experience providing many options.

- Communications on this new fund will be coming out end of September from TIAA. Webinars and seminars from TIAA will be available. The aim is to implement this new fund in the fall.

Questions:

De Vallejo: Is this a change or the introduction of a new fund?

Kluchurosky: This is an introduction of new target date fund and faculty will be encouraged to take advantage of it.

De Vallejo stated that he likes to be involved in his own retirement account and that he has found the changes to be confusing over the years. It seems that the options available have contracted and many funds are poor performing. Why doesn't the Benefits reverse this contraction?

Kluchurosky: Previously there were a large number of funds that were not maintained leading to potentially too many options

Tashbook: Suits were filed at other institutions because there were too many confusing options and many funds were not performing. Benefits offices have reduced the number but includes some with low risk that do not look good. The Benefits and Welfare Committee has oversight over the funds. Irvin interacts personally with investment fund managers, and investigates and report to the retirement oversight committee.

De Vallejo complained about the lack of choice

Irvin: responded to describe other options for using more funds.

Labrinidis: Does this add something or does it reduce options?

Answer: This is adding an option for a target date fund

Labrinidis: this is important as it means that it is not a contraction and is rather an increase in options.

Songer: Does it apply to all target dates?

Irvin: It will vary depending on date

Unfinished Business and /or New Business

None

- **Announcements**

Tashbook

The Mental Wellness Task Force is instituting a new family and friend support group from people who have friends or family members with mental illness. This will be a lunch time meeting to share experiences and provide support. It will be held on the second Monday of each month, noon to 1PM in 156, Cathedral of Learning. Participants will bring a lunch and share experiences. Information will be coming out on the website shortly.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Penelope (Penny) Morel
Secretary, University Senate

Members attending:

Almarza, Balaban, Bell, Bircher, Bonneau, Bratman, Buchanich, Burton, Cousins, Cutsumbis, Dallal, Damiani, Denman, Epitropoulos, Falcione, Fort, Glynn, Guterman, Hall, Jacobs, Jones, Kanthak, Kear, Kovacs, Labrinidis, Lemery, Mahboobin, Maier, Massanelli, Mauk, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Morris, Newman, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paljug, Parker, Paterson, Pitetti, Reed, Salcido, Sant, Schmidt, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Shephard, Songer, Stoner, Streeter, Tashbook, Tokowicz, Tudorascu, K. Wood, Yearwood, Zack

Members not attending:

Archibald, Bove, Giandomenico-Meaner, Kohanbash, Lewin, I. Murtazashvili, Oyler, Potoski, Taboas, Triplette, Yates

*Excused attendance:

Bench, Conley, Livingston, J. Murtazashvili, Nguyen, Swigonova, G. Wood

Others attending:

Bonner, Conmy, De Vallejo, Finder, France, Frieze, Irvin, Jackson, Jones, Kluchurosky, Ledger, Massimiani, SantaCasa, Sterne, Stonesifer, Tenney, Wang-Erickson, Wells

*Notified Senate Office