

Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom
Wednesday, September 1, 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 May 12, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

3. Items of New Business

De Vallejo wanted to discuss the unionization vote. Kear commented that it will be discussed after the reports

4. Report of the Senate President, Robin Kear

Hello and Welcome back to another exciting year!

- I want to thank so many of you for warmly welcoming me into this role. I appreciate your encouragement and confidence especially now in our current environment.
- I want to thank all of you for being committed to your students, teaching, and research during extraordinary times. I know you have been called on to do more, on short notice, and I appreciate your dedication. These extraordinary times create personal and societal upheaval that is difficult but necessary, and, hopefully, gives us the opportunity to do things better and focus on what is most important.
- I expect you all to reach out to me whenever you need to. A little later we will talk about communication methods.
- Due to the various time constraints of those I have invited today, my report will continue after our main discussions.

Logistics for our discussion:

- We will be in a hybrid meeting model for the foreseeable future.
- Kris Kanthak will be monitoring the chat and alert me to who needs to be recognized next from the chat. Bear with us as we learn a rhythm to doing this.
- When you are joining from Zoom:
 - I ask that you please affirm anyone's remarks by either typing +1 into the chat, or selecting your green check mark Yes (as long as you have the latest Zoom version, this should be an option under reactions). This helps us to understand consensus.
 - If you have something new to say, or something that hasn't been expressed, in a current discussion, please use the Raise Hand under reactions.
 - If you want to raise a new topic as an aspect of the current discussion, type new topic in the chat and let the first discussion play out.

- As a general reminder, you all speak here according to your own opinions and perspectives. You also represent and speak for the interests of the group of faculty that elected you. If it is pertinent, please note in the discussion if you are expressing the sentiment of your group.
- Determining consensus of the will of the faculty assembly is a difficult prospect and is an important aspect of my role. If I know the strength of a position from the assembly, it makes it much easier for me to advocate.

5. Unfinished Business and /or New Business

Vaccination Discussion

Geovette Washington, Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Legal Officer and Dr. John V. Williams, Director of the CMRO

I have asked Geovette and John here to discuss the current vaccine control program. I have also asked that they share the most recent vaccination rates with us.

Williams: Oakland Campus – 78% of employees have shown proof of vaccination, (77% faculty, 80% staff) 87% overall students – 86% graduate students, 87% undergraduate students, 96% on campus undergraduate students, 82% off campus undergrads

Regional campuses: 75% faculty, 66% staff and 67% undergraduate students

International students – most have gotten WHO vaccines, or they can go to Pitt Vaccine at Nordenberg Hall

Overall percentages – all campuses: 77% faculty, 79% staff, 86% grad students, 83% undergrad students, 92% teaching faculty

Scott asked what is the percentage of non-compliance with testing when required?

Williams: We don't know yet, it just started on Monday. Dashboard is coming soon

Kear: Will it have the positivity rate?

Williams: Yes, it will list many numbers and an explanation

Washington: CMRO data will be sent every week on Thursday mornings

Scott: Interested in a vaccine mandate, and the testing for the unvaccinated

Washington: There's a process, mandatory testing, warning, disciplinary action. Mandate is what UVA is doing – disenrolling students. We are happy to hear people's view and what makes sense. Pitt is working and looking at giving boosters at Pitt Covax. In terms of mandating vaccination, it's easy for students, ie – they can't enroll, but what about faculty, staff, union employees?

Morel: Not sure a mandate will do much

Washington: Our numbers are high, it's more of a comfort level

De Vallejo: Are we still using the self-check form?

Washington: It's available, but not many people are using it. It's not required. Mask mandate is in place because we believe it works.

Paterson: Posvar A/C system – windowless teaching rooms. How is the air circulated? Is this information available?

Washington: We have that information, <https://www.fm.pitt.edu/cleaning-and-hvac-campus>. Geovette will send information directly to Mark.

McCormick: asked about the Parkvale Bldg A/C. Geovette will supply details.

McCormick asked what is allowed regarding eating/drinking in buildings.

Washington: You can eat on campus, some units are designating a specific place for eating, but it's not required.

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Lu-in Wang

Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity & Development John Wallace

I have asked Lu-in and John here today to update us on various initiatives from the Provost's office. We met in July and there are many developments that we should all be aware of.

Wallace: Over the summer we worked on a mission statement for our office; Pitt received a \$250,000 grant from the R.K. Mellon Foundation to help support a research collaboratory of interdisciplinary teams working to address specific issues. The first issue is related to infant mortality. The IChange initiative has changed to the Pitt Change initiative to signal the focus is on the entire institution; 21 faculty are joining the University this semester as a result of the Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-being Cluster Hire and Retention Initiative.

Wang: Provost Advisory Council on Tenure and Promotion, which is the new university wide committee that advises the Provost on approved tenure and promotion cases. The cases that come from the schools and regional campuses recommending tenure or promotion. This committee comprises four subcommittees that each focus on a particular group of faculty. It will be phased in over the next three years. Last year, 2 subcommittees were active, 21 cases were reviewed.

Songer: Will it speed up the time?

Wang: It will regularize the time/schedule

Scott: Is SOM included?

Wang: SOM has a subcommittee; your dean can nominate you to serve on the committee

Wallace: We are looking how to improve diversity, equity and inclusion work in our tenure promotion process as well as engaged scholarship. We're collecting data and looking at best practices.

Wang: We are looking at an ad hoc committee to develop it then it will go to committees, Faculty Assembly and Council of Deans. I'm also working on an ombudsman working group, we are trying to establish a neutral, independent, University-wide centralized ombudsman service that would be available to all members of the Pitt community to help with conflict resolution, identify issues to offer systemic change.

Kear: Thank you both, it's a lot

Kregg-Byers: What is happening for intense faculty mentoring?

Wallace: There is a mentoring piece on the cluster hire

Bircher: Advisory council on promotion & tenure – do they only look at cases approved by the dean?

Wang: Yes

Bircher: A greater degree of objectivity would be faculty on the committee not only recommend by the dean.

President's Report (continued)

My personal connections to Pitt and Pittsburgh

- I ask for your indulgence for a few minutes so that I can share part of my personal story. Some of you don't know me at all and some of you I have worked with for many years. I want to share some of my personal connections to Pitt and Pittsburgh.
- I was raised just outside of the city near the Allegheny River. My great-grandparents emigrated to this area from Eastern and Northern Europe for economic opportunity. They were farmers, house cleaners, nannies, coal miners, manufacturing workers, and shop workers. One of my grandfathers was a coal miner until the 1970s. My father has held many jobs, including as a steelworker at the J&L steel plant that used to be on Second Ave., where Pitt and CMU now teach and create. My mother has held many office jobs and worked in graphic design for newspapers. I was born at Magee Hospital.
- I am a first-generation college student, although I didn't really think about it in that way then. I attended Chatham College for my undergraduate degree in global policy studies. During one undergraduate summer, I lived in South Oakland, subletting from Pitt students, and worked at the Carnegie Museum pinning bugs for the etymology department, walking to work past this very building. During one class I volunteered at the local ACLU office that used to be in an old house on Atwood Street. I took French and lived in Angers, France for a spring term. I had a sizable college debt when I graduated.
- I was a staff member at Pitt in 1999, working in the Health Sciences Library, planning to work here and receive free tuition. I was accepted to Pitt for graduate work and expected to attend but life took me in a different direction. Before that graduate work was due to start, I took exactly one Pitt summer class in Philosophy, in a very hot Cathedral of Learning classroom. I know what a behemoth the university can seem like to students.
- I moved away from Pittsburgh for about 8 years. I lived in Monterey California, completing my graduate work in San Jose, at a Cal State school. After that, I lived in Africa, in Nairobi Kenya, interning for the United Nations. I have visited around 40 countries and 5 continents. I lived in South Florida working as a librarian. I met my husband there and we moved back to Pittsburgh when I received my current position here, 14 years ago. We have two sons, ages 12 and 8, who were also born at Magee Hospital.
- I am telling you all of this so that you can understand me a little better, a little bit about my experiences, where I come from, and how I have changed and grown. I have strong ties to Pittsburgh and Pitt, moved beyond them, and yet, came back.
- During my time at Pitt, I have been involved in various roles in the senate since 2012, including serving as Vice President for three years. I started this work because it gave me a wider view of the university, but I discovered that it can actually make change for the better, and that's why I continue.
- Over my time as President, I hope to learn more of your personal stories, as they are the most interesting and fascinating parts of life.

Unionization Vote

- There is a very important vote on union representation going on right now for approximately 3,000 faculty members (a large portion of our 5,200 faculty.) If you are part of this voting, please do so. It is very important that everyone votes.
- As we are elected to represent all faculty, I want the Faculty Assembly and Senate Council to take a neutral position on whether those eligible should vote yes or no. We will not be an obstacle nor an advocate for either position.
- I am continuing to examine interaction between faculty unions and faculty governance at other institutions and in the research.
- As many of you have been doing, I encourage all of you to share your opinion and perspective on the union effort, if you are comfortable doing so.

Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee

- Next month, I plan to bring the creation of an ad hoc committee for a vote to you and to Senate Council. This ad hoc committee would be looking at the many aspects of dependent care, including childcare and elder care. I have found that there are varied issues that can be examined and unified under one group, that belong under more than one existing committee's purview. I feel that focusing a committee with the purpose to act, benchmark, and recommend will be beneficial for this issue.
- While I will be thinking about who is best to serve on this committee, if you think of someone I should consider, including yourself, please let me know within the next two weeks. I cannot promise to include all who might be suggested, but I would appreciate your recommendations. I need doers.
- I have met with several groups over the summer on these issues and can share one new development from Pitt HR to expand our childcare options. There is a new partnership between Pitt and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. The Boys & Girls Clubhouses in Lawrenceville and Carnegie are offering all-day preschool programming for ages 3-5 for Pitt faculty, staff, and graduate students. There are 20 spots at each location. (\$200 per week, 7:30 am to 6 pm) If these are successful, there is potential for the partnership to grow. Please let others know of this opportunity.

Budget Model ReSTART

- I have joined this group, received an orientation, and attend one meeting so far. I received all the slide decks and have been going through them. My understanding is that there was a Dean's retreat earlier this week and we are meeting tomorrow to discuss those outcomes. As far I as know, the Budget ReSTART is on track to run parallel to the current budget in October. There will be a meeting later this month to look at governance and the new budget model.

Resilience Steering Committee

- This group was created last summer to provide a shared governance perspective and input on decisions related to the pandemic. I have joined this group, I met once with them in June around my transition time. This group did not meet as much as I would have wished for in the summer,

but as the pandemic is still very much with us, there was one meeting last week, and I am assured it is back on track to meet regularly.

Communication

- I hope you know that I am just an email, Zoom, or phone call away. This fall I will be trying out an open office hour. It will be Tuesdays from 10 to 11 am, starting Sept 7th through Dec. 7th. I will share the Zoom link with you via email after the meeting. Feel free to share it with other faculty in your areas. I will have a waiting room, so if you arrive and are waiting, please be patient.
 - Meeting URL: <https://pitt.zoom.us/j/98696737092>
 - Meeting ID: 986 9673 7092
- The assembly last year had a Teams communication channel. Do you want this again? Or some other communication channel?

Other

- Since our transition meeting in July, I have had many conversations and many meet-and-greets with various Pitt administrators and shared governance partners, such as Staff Council. I served on the Diversity Forum Planning Committee.
- When I hear concerns directly from faculty and elevate them, please know that I do so anonymously.

De Vallejo: Grievance Policy needs updated. TAFC should have a large representation on the charter.

Kear: Provost's Office is looking at updating it

De Vallejo: Faculty unionization, SOM is excluded from the vote

Bickford: Authorization cards were submitted in 2019 at that time SOM was represented by a bargaining agent so SOM is not included

De Vallejo: Concerned SOM is excluded

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 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, Bungler, Burton, Collister, Covington-Ward, Damiani, Darnell, Denman, De Vallejo, Frieze, Glynn, Guterman, Jeffrey, Jeong, R. Jones, Judd, Kanthak, Kear, Kiesling, Klem, Kregg-Byers, Labrinidis, Mahboobin, Maier, Massanelli, McCormick,

Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, I. Murtazashvili, Newman, Nguyen, Oyler, Pacella-LaBarbara, Paterson, Potoski, Rauktis, Reed, Roberts, Salcido, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Songer, Streeter, Taboas, Tashbook, Tokowicz, Vento, Wiggins, Wood, Yates, Yearwood, Zack

Members not attending:

Bench, Buchanich, Hall, Henker, A. Jones, Kiselyov, Kohanbash, Kory, Mulcahy, J. Murtazashvili, Stoner, Swigonova, Triplette, Tudorascu

*Excused attendance:

Bove, Conley, Fort, Kovacs, Lewin, Paljug, Sant

Others attending:

Harrell, Hitter, Insana, Jones, Lalo, Manges, Mash, McNaught, Munro, O'Neill, Roadman, Russell, Rutenbar, SantaCasa, Seldin, Suppok, Tananis, Tuncer, Tuttle, Wallace, Wang, Washington, Williams, Wilson, Zwick

*Notified Senate Office