

Senate Community Relations Committee meeting
12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Room 272, Hillman Library
March 20, 2012

Attendees: Genevieve Barbee, Community Human Services; Denise Chisholm, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; G. Reynolds Clark, Vice Chancellor for Community Initiatives; Laurie Cohen, ULS, Co-Chair, CRC; Mary Davidson, Oakland Business Improvement District; Marian Hampton, ULS; Peter Hart, *University Times*; Linda Hartman, HSL; Bryan Perry, Oakland Planning and Development Corporation; Trevor Smith, CHS; Tara Sherry-Torres, OPDC; Patricia Weiss, HSL, Senate Liaison

Old Business: The minutes were approved as read.

Co-Chair Remarks: Martha Ann Terry was unable to attend, but wanted to revisit the idea from an earlier meeting concerning the lack of visible address numbers for university buildings, in light of the tragedy at WPIC. Linda has offered to contact someone on the Senate Plant Utilization and Planning Committee about this issue. We also discussed the Emergency Notification Service. Students can list up to three different numbers for notifications by the University, and one option is to list their parents' number(s). More than 44,000 users have signed up so far, and it is available on all five campuses. All of the messages go out within 20 minutes.

University Updates: Pitt day in Harrisburg was successfully held last week, and there were 500 attendees. Governor Corbett appeared to be unmoved by the comments of those who opposed cuts in state support for Pitt. The University intends to continue to press the case. The Chancellor indicated that there will be major challenges if the new budget cuts are passed. He doesn't want to put this burden on Pitt students. One aspect of the impact is that the University won't be able to be as proactive with our community partners. Pitt might need to consider going private, although the chancellor is not in favor of that. Private universities don't have branch campuses, and don't generally interact as much with their local communities. This would be a major change for us.

The Graduate Student and Professional Association hosted the governor last week for their Politics and Pancakes event. 300 students attended, and had some very pointed questions for Governor Corbett. 80% of the students there were in-state. Private universities have higher rates than we currently do. If we lose the \$40 million in state support, a lot of changes will be made, because the state provides money to help keep tuition lower for in-state versus out-of-state students.

There are a number of construction projects underway on campus, including those at Salk Hall and the School of Public Health. There may be lane closures as work progresses on the dormitory being built on Fifth Avenue. The dorm should be completed by August 2013.

Community Partner Reports: Genevieve Barbee from Community Human Services presented a *Year in Review* for CHS, which began 40 years ago. One of their major accomplishments is staffing the Food Pantry at their location on Lawn Street. Over the past year, the University has contributed 127 cases of food to the pantry. They also have a virtual food pantry, which is one of the best funded in the area. More than 1000 volunteer hours are devoted to the pantry, and last year, more than \$10,000 was donated. There are also almost 1500 pounds of pet food donated. The pantry is a starting point for other programming, but CHS's main focus is on housing. They serve as a safety net for health and housing issues.

CHS's in-home services program provides personal care assistance to keep people out of nursing homes and prevent eviction. Last year, 91 people took advantage of this service, which is available to adults ages 18 to 59 in the City of Pittsburgh (except for those on the North Side). CHS also sponsors youth programs, family foundations programs, and the annual Sleep-In for the Homeless. In the future there will be more of an emphasis on homelessness. There is also a housing eviction prevention program, and two new houses were recently purchased. Another program is a shelter for LGBTQ clients.

Community programs include meeting space for different groups, such as the Oakcliff Housing Club and the Wednesday Wanderers, SAT prep courses, the community computer lab, and the United Way tax assistance program. Computer literacy classes are offered by an Americorps volunteer, and they also sponsor needle exchanges and literacy programs.

CHS provides internships for local students. Their art group holds their meetings in the Smile 'n' Dine, which has been around for forty years, having begun as a soup kitchen. The Smile 'n' Dine provides low-cost prepared meals delivered throughout the local area. CHS works with a local dietician to provide nutrition information, and the Healthier Option program is now provided daily. For some of CHS's clients, this is their main meal of the day. Free meal delivery is provided, along with a soup of the day. The Social Programs include a free meal and karaoke every other week.

Trevor Smith is working on the advocacy part of the agency, and he will be taking Genevieve's place, when she leaves in May. He will be working on the Get out the Vote initiative. Marnie mentioned the photo ID issue to Trevor as it relates to voter registration. The state will offer them for free, but you need a Medicare card, Social Security card, birth certificate, passport, or naturalization certificate, plus two proofs of residency to get a photo ID. People can also get them from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Tara Sherry-Torres from Oakland Planning and Development Corporation spoke next. OPDC was formed 30 years ago, as a CHS initiative. Bryan Perry is the new assistant director, working with JobLinks. They help people get a foothold in the job world. 8 people are currently working with Bryan on this initiative. They prepare people to get jobs in the health care sector, and provide service to over 1200 clients a year. One of the programs is certified nurse assistance placement preparation.

JobLinks helps clients with their resumés, mock interviews, online job searches, and overcoming barriers to getting and keeping a job. Courses in CPR are taught, and they partner with Welfare-to-Work clients through the City of Pittsburgh. JobLinks has a high placement rate, with an 80% retention rate at 6 months, and they follow up with the hiring agencies. They will be moving to the former Oakland senior center on Louisa Street, where both JobLinks and the School 2 Career program will be located. The new space will be called the Career Center.

In the School 2 Career program, high school students are in the program for four years. At-risk students from Oakland, Uptown, and the Hill district learn job skills and are mentored by Oakland employers. They engage in job shadowing and internships to acquire experience. There is a 100% high school and college graduation rate. Students in the LEED program work on green programs with Phipps Conservatory staff and learn about sustainability and the environment.

Other programs of OPDC include housing and real estate development. They manage rental properties in an effort to keep Oakland housing affordable. They currently own 80 rental units. OPDC was also a major stakeholder in the Oakland 2025 Community Plan.

Mary Davidson from OBID showed everyone the new Scenable web page at Scenable.com. The site was created with a grant from PPND. According to their web site, "Senable is an online platform for connecting to, participating in and interacting with local communities." Oakland is the pilot neighborhood for the project, which launches sometime in May. Related to this development, OBID recently offered social media training sessions to Oakland businesses and community partners in partnership with OnlyInPgh.com. In other news, the Oakland Farmers Market is accepting vendor applications. The Market starts in June.

Submitted April 5, 2012

Laurie Cohen and Marian Hampton