

Minutes - Senate Budget Policies Committee
Friday, March 24, 2023
1:00-3:00 pm via Zoom meeting

Members in attendance: Juan Taboas (Chair), Panos Chrysanthis, Tracey Olanyk, John Gallagher, Gary Hollibaugh, Emily Murphy, Gong Tang, Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte (SC), Anna Yatsko, Tobin Brooks, Robin Kear (Senate President), Amanda Brodish, Rich Henderson, Thurman Wingrove, Stephen Wisniewski, Susan Jones (University Times)

Absent: Maximilian Schuster, Brian Smith (SC/McGowan), Frank Wilson, Chris Bonneau, Rikesh Kumar Dubey, Carson Hawk, Varbi Mridha

Call to Order at: 1 p.m.

1. Results of AY23 PBC member survey (Thurman Wingrove presenting)

This is the 5th PBC survey. There were 145 complete responses out of 297 individuals identified as PBC members, who received a survey request. This represents a 48.8% response rate, which is the highest yet.

The survey is essentially the same as previous year, with a minor tweak. Question 15 is new.

Adriana Maguiña-Ugarte noted that, aside from the DSAS and School of Ed., the summary demographics did not list student members responses; Adriana asked if students are not part of PBCs in other schools when they should also be. Thurman was not aware of students not being included; he will inquire and follow up.

Robin Kear commented on respondents' comments and expressed surprise to see how many people indicated PBCs having little involvement on budget-related matters.

Juan Taboas asked for two volunteers (by 3/31/23) to meet with RC's PBCs and follow up on what to cover during these meetings. This is a follow-up after the orientation Steve Wisniewski and Thurman provided in the fall, and after the survey. He plans on sharing best practices, sharing all information available, meeting more often, etc.

Gong Tang is concerned that different RCs have different charters for their PBCs.

Juan and Thurman clarified the RCs need to cover what is outlined on the PBS

2. Travel Advance Policy

The document was shared with the committee prior to this meeting. It is not a usual document this committee reviews, but it represents a new procedure involving budgetary decisions. Individuals with OneCard will need to be pre-authorized to withdraw funds needed for travel to locations where credit cards are not accepted. Cash can be taken out of an ATM (preferred). Reporting on the cash used/not used must be submitted well before the IRS deadline of 120 days after a cash advance has been processed.

Gong asked whether the cash advances will incur in ATM fees. It was clarified that fees will not be charged.

All present voting members of the BPC voted to approve the policy. It will be presented in Faculty Assembly next.

** Susan Jones also reported her coverage of the first two agenda items in the March 31 issue of the University Times: <http://www.utimes.pitt.edu/news/survey-unit-level>*

3. Old business:

Gong inquired about the new Budget Model, if it is still starting this FY23 (July 1, 2023). Steve confirmed that it will officially be starting this July 1, but reminded us that FY22 was a ghost year where the new model was not in effect but was monitored to see how it would work.

Gong added that he feels his school is still confused by the credit tuition income formula. Steve and Thurman will follow up with him/his school.

4. New business

Juan recalled the issue of online courses at regional campuses about two years which were not vetted. His school is asking about online courses, but there is a lot of opposition.

Robin reminded the group the company back then was Outlier, and that there is another company called Coursera (sp).

Steve clarified that approving a course will depend in whether or not they are for a “degree seeking” or “non-degree seeking” program. Coursera targets a broader audience. Steve indicates that probably online Masters will be more common but that the decisions are up to individual schools, and will be coordinated by the Graduate School Office.

Non-degree granting programs and occasional courses can be developed online.

Major issues relate to undergraduate majors, as in-person is still the better, preferred format of instruction.