

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

**Wednesday, September 6, 2023**

**1. Call to Order**

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Faculty Assembly Meeting**

Kear asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Linda Tashbook pointed out a typo on page 6. On a motion duly made (Scott) and seconded (Stoner) the minutes of the May 10, 2023, Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved with the typo corrected.

**3. Items of New Business.**

None

**4. 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.

The officers and I held our annual transition meeting in July and continued working on various items over the summer. But it was relatively quiet. I took a real vacation, meaning there were no meetings I just had to squeeze in, and also got COVID again. I hope that you had a chance to relax and rejuvenate yourself for the year ahead.

This year we are continuing the hybrid option for Faculty Assembly and Senate Council. We would appreciate if you try and use the Zoom option only if necessary; it is nice to see you in person. We will again be disabling the Chat function for meetings, if you are on Zoom, 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.

I have a few topics to update you on:

**New Leadership**

- I am working with our new Chancellor and new Interim Provost. We are off to a great start. A reminder that if you haven't met Joan yet, she is hosting a Chancellor's reception after Senate Council next Thursday.

**Faculty Representation on Provost Search Committee**

- In mid-August, I received notice from the Chancellor to start the process for faculty elections to the Provost Search Committee. This activated our Senate response and we scheduled to have the names by October 7th. Lori and I met to set out the timeline.
- For a Provost search, 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 so far related to selecting these faculty for the search committee.
  - Aug. 28 a Read Green went to eligible faculty asking for self-nominees.
  - Sept. 5th a Read Green reminder went out to eligible faculty.
- The deadline for self-nominees is September 11<sup>th</sup>. **Please consider this service for yourself and/or encourage others to self-nominate.** We are looking for a rich and diverse pool of candidates.
- The Guidelines also call for a nominating committee made up of Senate Council members in each area to evaluate all the nominees for the slate. I am chairing this group and it consists of: John Stoner and Dawn McCormick for A&S; Matt Burton and Ben Bratman for the Professional Schools; Alejandro Almarza and Tom Songer for the Health Sciences; and Adam Cilia from Greensburg for the Regionals.
  - We will be meeting on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> to finalize the slates for Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - After the slates are announced, faculty will 10 days to petition to be included in the vote.
- On Sept. 26th faculty who are eligible to vote will receive 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.
  - We will again run approval voting. "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.
- There is an incredible amount of administrative work behind the scenes that is done by Lori Molinaro and Linda SantaCasa to make this process work. Thank you.
  - We are also being assisted this year by Mary Jo Race in the Chancellor's Office.  
Thank you Mary Jo.

### Artificial Intelligence

- I have agreed to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee on Generative AI in Research and Education created by the Provost's Office and the Research Office. There are also several other Senate members involved in this work including Bonnie Falcione, David Wert, and John Stoner of Educational Policies, and Melanie Scott and Katherine Wood of the Research Committee.
- The committee was charged by Rob Rutenbar, Ann Cudd, and Joe McCarthy with making recommendations regarding use of G-AI in teaching, student learning, and research. Chairs Lisa Parker (our own Assembly member) and John Radzilowicz of the Teaching Center are planning to proceed with this charge:

- Articulate a “positive but careful approach to Generative AI”
- Identify topics where guidance is needed regarding Gen AI applications in research, teaching, and learning
- Conduct benchmarking with peer institutions regarding policies or guidance on Gen AI uses, particularly research uses as the CTL has already gathered so much on educational uses
- Map the landscape for uses of Gen AI at Pitt (including research and instructional uses)
- Crowdsource and gather together Gen AI resources, initiatives, activities (e.g., short courses), and programming
- Identify key areas in which Pitt can position itself as a leader in the Gen AI arena
- An initial report is expected by December 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Graduate Student Healthcare**

- Working with the Staff Council President, I have been trying to understand the decision making process for the jump in healthcare costs for graduate students that use Pitt’s plan this year. Monthly premiums have remained steady but there have been big jumps in deductibles, co-pays, portions of coverage, and pharmacy costs. Neither of us were informed that these changes were occurring, nor were graduate student administrators or Deans. I have also been in communication with the GPSG President.
  - Benefits & Welfare will be examining this issue at their first meeting in September. Linda Tashbook is working with HR and the GPSG President.
  - The creation of the [Pitt Student Health Insurance Medical Hardship Assistance Fund](#) is a direct response by Chancellor Gabel and Interim Provost McCarthy to the increase in costs for grad students.

### **Race-Based Admissions Changes**

- The Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs Committee will be discussing Pitt’s response to this summer’s Supreme Court decision that race can no longer be considered a factor in university admissions nationwide in one of their upcoming meetings.
- Pitt has been preparing for this decision.

### **Summer Access to Services by Part-Time Faculty**

- I heard of no major issues this summer. The new process for keeping ID access through the summer has worked great. I hope this has made a small, meaningful difference for our part-time and adjunct faculty. Thanks again to Pitt IT, HR, and the Panther Central Office for working with us.

### **University Policy Open for Comment**

- There are currently no policies open for public comment.

### **Interim Policy**

- There is an interim policy on Research Data Management that will be coming our way next month.

### **Union Relations**

- The Senate-Union communication group met yesterday September 5<sup>th</sup> and will continue to meet through the year as needed.

### **Safety**

- There have been improvements made since the last academic year regarding classrooms and communications. Ted Fritz, Vice Chancellor for Public Safety and Emergency Management, is here to update us and take our questions.

Thank you for your service and dedication to shared governance.

Any questions or comments on my report?

Stoner: We will be seeing a new FERPA policy coming through late this year. Two quick questions: Is it safe to assume that the Provost search will identify someone mid to late summer next year? The second question concerns the changes to health care costs and whether postdocs are also affected by these changes?

Kear: I am not sure whether postdocs are affected but I can ask. I am not sure which plan they belong to

Tashbook: They are considered staff unless they are funded by a grant, in which case they are not under Pitt benefits.

Kear: Thank you, Linda. The result of provost search should be next summer.

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

None

## **6. Unfinished Business and /or New Business**

### University Safety Update

Mr. Ted Fritz, Vice Chancellor for the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management

Ted Fritz started his presentation by drawing attention to pedestrian safety in Oakland, as there is a lot of potential frustration when many students are crossing the streets.

Concerning safety there have been three main areas of focus this summer: 1) communication. 2) the availability of campus-wide safety training for faculty, students and staff and 3) enhanced physical security.

Concerning communication, it needs to be prompt and accurate. Following the active shooter hoaxes we need to make sure that our communication specialists and our supervisors in the police department are trained on the prompt and accurate sending out of emergency

notification messages. We now conduct weekly training with them, using different scenarios, so they are practicing what they are going to say and how they do it. These are high stress situations and the more training people have the better prepared they will be. We have also come up with preplanned messages for different situations, including whether an incident is confirmed or not. We have conducted training with Pitt IT and the vendor of the emergency notification system.

Pitt police have been training for many years on response to these incidents, and this is continuing. They needed more practice on the communications side of things, and this is happening now. We want our police supervisors to go to those scenes and be conducting oversight of the response, rather than back at the police station dealing with messaging. We have reallocated some resources so that the messaging takes place as well. We have cross trained other staff in the police station to do this and rebalanced workloads.

We will be hiring a communications room supervisor who will oversee the dispatchers, and, in an emergency situation, will be responsible for crafting those messages. You will see that at the end of these messages you will be told to go to [emergency.pitt.edu](https://emergency.pitt.edu) for more details. Updates will be posted there as we cannot be sending out ENS messages continuously. The website will be updated every 15 minutes or sooner. We have hired an Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Safety. His name is Scott Argiro. He comes from the FBI and he will run our integrated security department and help us with threat assessments. He was in charge of the Western PA Joint Terrorism Task Force and he comes to us with great experience.

The police has been producing videos that we will hope will explain some of terminology and protocols that will help keep you safe, and answer questions. We have produced videos on lockdowns, evacuation and panic alarms among other topics. These videos will be available to the community this week. It is important that you all need to know what to do in these dangerous situations. We need to get this out to the graduate student population, who are also engaged in teaching.

We have placed 100 Stop the Bleed kits around campus and the map for these can be found on the website. There are also many AED kits around campus. Our officers all carry Stop the Bleed kits and have AED kits in their patrol cars.

We conducted 99 tests of alarms around campus this summer to make sure they were all working, and testing fire protection systems.

People with disabilities can file for personal evacuation plans to EH&S and these will be communicated to the first responders so that these can be implemented. We have communicated these changes to the University Safety Ambassador Network, which was started during COVID and we have asked them to stay on. We will continue to use them to help spread the word. The Office of University communications has developed a yearlong safety campaign for us, and you will hear more this through the year.

We have developed a call center and conducted three active shooter exercises at all campuses.

Panic buttons have been installed in most classrooms – 400 have been installed. Locks have been installed on all classroom doors, electronic or mechanical. Please let us know if you come

across a classroom that does not have a lock. Pressing the panic button will alert the police and lock the door electronically. You can leave the classroom, but you cannot get back in.

The panic lock video was played.

Twenty-nine new cameras have been installed in the Cathedral. We have over 1500 cameras installed around campus. The Regional campuses are a little behind on camera coverage and we are working on it.

Questions?

Scott: Thank you for this information. Are you providing training for CPR, and the use of AED and stop the bleed, as people may be scared about how to use these?

Fritz: this is really important, and we will be working with CUPS to identify people who can provide the training. This will be step two.

Bell: In the science buildings we have emergency contact numbers etc. Would it be possible to have similar notices in classrooms as to where some of these kits are in the building.

Fritz: This is a great idea and could be done using a QR code. We are working on this with University Communications.

McCormick: I wonder if you have considered providing transcripts for the videos, especially for our students who do not use English as a first language. Some of the captions provided are not accurate.

Fritz: That is an excellent suggestion, and we will look into this.

Taboas: How long is the video from the cameras kept and what is the status of our blue light phones? Are these still effective?

Fritz: This summer we sent someone around to assess all our blue light phones – to make sure they are working. We are keeping them as not everyone has a cell phone. The video footage is overwritten after 30 days.

Cutsumbis: We have from EM program from SHRS and we have several resources to give stop the belled training, and we can handle up to 30 people at a time.

Fritz: we would be happy to publicize this

Tashbook: I would like to put in a testimonial for the Citizen's Police Academy that I attended last fall. I would encourage everyone to consider signing up for it.

Kear: Thanks Linda. If you and Alex want to put links to these in the chat we can add to the minutes

Reed: Concerning the traffic situation, do we coordinate with the City concerning people running red lights and speeders as I have noticed many buses, shuttles etc run red lights all the time.

Fritz: This is a problem. We do have motorcycle patrols out and issue citations or warnings, Input like yours is really important.

Kear: Thank you Ted, for all the work you have been doing over the summer and we do appreciate your efforts in this area. We hope we will not need them but we are grateful to you and your team for all of the work that you are doing.

## **7. Announcements**

None

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 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:

Adams, Almarza, Archibald, Balaban, Bell, Bircher, Bonneau, Burton, Caldwell, Cutsumbis, Damiani, Dewhirst, DiCesaro, Dietz, Epitropoulos, Falcione, Ferdinand, Fort, Glass Glynn, Guterman, Holding, Jacobs, Jenkins, Jones, Kanthak, Kaufman, Kear, Keown, Kohanbash, Lemery, Mahboobin, Maier, Massanelli, Mattern, Mauk, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Morris, Murtazashvili, Paljug, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Salcido, Schmidt, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Shephard, Songer, Stoner, Swigonova, Taboas, Tashbook, Wiggins, Wood, Zack

### Members not attending:

Bratman, Dallal, Flick, Heffernan, Khader, Lewin, Nguyen, Potoski, Wert, Yates

### \*Excused attendance:

Bove, Cousins, Good, Hall, Kovacs, Tudorascu

### Others attending:

France, Frieze, Fritz, Jones, Kirdy, Ringler, SantaCasa, Tokowicz, Tuttle, Wells, Wisniewski

\*Notified Senate Office