

FACULTY ASSEMBLY MEETING
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 3 p.m.
HYBRID
2700 Posvar Hall and VIA ZOOM

1. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

2. Approval of Faculty Assembly Minutes of March 6, 2024

On a motion duly made (Stoner) and seconded (Parker) the minutes of the March 6, 2024 Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved as written.

3. Introduction of Items of New Business

None

4. Report of the President, Robin Kear

Hello all and welcome back, I hope you are all doing well.

Academic Calendar for Fall 2024

- Our Educational Policies Committee has discussed a concern about the end of the upcoming Fall term and the Academic Calendar. There is what I would call a December squish between Thanksgiving being late in November and giving students enough time to finish projects and get ready for finals in a reasonable time frame. This fall, finals start 10 days after students return from Thanksgiving on Wednesday 12/11.
- The term and finals end on Tuesday 12/17, grades are due on Thursday 12/19 at one minute before midnight, and Monday Dec. 23 starts winter recess.
- Vice Provost Godley explained to the committee that there are many competing pressures and there are many stakeholders involved on the Calendar Committee. Every possible scenario for the end of the fall term was discussed.
- It is a good reminder that, even after grades are handed in by faculty, there is work done by staff related to December graduation processes and other items for students that have to be completed before the spring term starts. There needed to be time for that too.
- I urge you to take a look at the end of the fall term now, as a consideration for planning your fall classes. This was also reported in the University Times.

Songer: I have a comment. Thank you to the University Times for publicizing this. This is a drastic change from the traditional fall calendar. The students have two additional holidays in October and classes are to be remote on election day. More than one message needs to go out to the faculty about this, as many are not aware of these changes.

Kear: I would urge you all as elected representatives to please publicize this, before the end of May.

Senate 2024 Elections

- These are upcoming, and one starts tomorrow. Please vote.
- Elections will be as follows:

- Secretary and Faculty Assembly Members– April 4-19. All faculty will receive the ballot for secretary, and only faculty in those units electing faculty assembly members will receive those.
- Senate Committees: April 26-May 8. Elected faculty serving in the Senate receive these ballots.

Update On Zoom

- As updated to Senate Council on 3/21, (to misquote Mark Twain), Zoom says to us, ‘the reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.’
- After working with Faculty Affairs, SCITC, and Mark Henderson our CIO, I have a welcome update.
- Pitt is renewing the contract with Zoom and maintaining the status quo through July 1, and it will be status quo going forward for the basic level of Zoom meetings.
 - The basic level of Zoom costs will be shared among the Responsibility Centers.
- After July 1, for those units that need Zoom webinars/premium licenses, there will be instances available. These will be shared instances and shared costs depending on the need.
- We should all expect to continue using Zoom as we have been.

General Education Task Force

- The General Education Task Force has been established and includes Senate representation from Senate Educational Policies.
- The Task Force is seeking input as it begins conversations with students, faculty, and staff about re-visioning our general education curriculum. All faculty and staff members are welcome to attend, learn more about this initiative, and provide feedback on your experiences with the general education curriculum at Pitt. The schedule includes both in-person and virtual options.
- You can also fill in a survey on their website.
- They start on March 20th and there are 9 sessions for faculty/staff through April 22nd. Visit their website to register.

Stoner: Some feedback that we received from Belkys Torres, who is spearheading this, is that the comments from faculty have been very good but there has been very little input from students. They are encouraging faculty to help identify students who want to participate. Belkys said they would be willing to come and provide presentations and take feedback from students.

Comment from Bradford: In Bradford faculty were asked to come up with 3 students from each Division and each Division managed to come up with at least three. They had a meeting Monday and it was quite successful.

Kear: Please encourage your students to participate, and we will ask Belkys to come and report to us in the Fall.

Plan for Pitt

- More detailed information is being released very soon. I encourage you to be on the lookout for more later this week.

Chancellor’s Installation and Faculty Honors

- The Faculty Honors Convocation has been combined this year with the Chancellor’s official Installation ceremony. I am happy to take part in that event this Friday.

Extension of the Year of Discourse and Dialogue

- The 2023-24 Year of Discourse & Dialogue Capstone Event will be held this Friday April 5th, Developing Capacity for Discourse and Dialogue Across Our Campuses. We sent an email to Faculty Assembly members last week to remind you of this event and encourage spreading the word.
- Provost McCarthy and Chancellor Gabel have decided that to extend the Year of Discourse and Dialogue to continue through the academic year 2024-25. Carissa Slotterback, Dean of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and Clyde Pickett, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, will continue to lead the 2024-25 Year of Discourse and Dialogue.
- These efforts have been successful this year, there is always more to do, and are very important in our continual work to balance the responsibilities of free speech and diverse viewpoints on our intellectually varied and vibrant campus.

University Policy Open for Comment

- There are currently no policies open for comment.

Thank you all for your service and dedication to shared governance.

Any questions or comments on my report?

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

None

6. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

Campus and Classroom Space Discussion

Christopher Coat, Associate Registrar, Greg Smith, Capital Projects and Physical Resources Manager, Carolyn Verga, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Planning

Kear introduced the guests to the Assembly. Issues concerning space and classrooms come up in various committees. The CUPS committee hears a lot of this information but we thought it would be useful to get an overview of the issue.

Smith provided an overview of the Learning Space Management Committee that is a Provost area committee charged with judicious stewardship of all learning spaces at Pitt. The membership is quite broad and includes individuals from facilities management as we spend some time making sure the physical space is maintained. The website for the LSMC is <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/LSMC>. We have a new classroom budget and scheduling model, we have developed a database of the technology available in each classroom, and we have a 5 year refresh cycle for the technology in all of the rooms. We have developed standard guidelines for classroom, which helps us decide on where renovations are needed. He outlined some of the recent renovations that have taken place, and changes in the Cathedral of Learning 2nd floor rooms are upcoming. This will take three summers to complete, and several rooms will not be available in the Fall for scheduling.

Coats talked about the scheduling models. The number of classes has remained fairly constant over the last 10 years. A couple of issues have arisen including the number of renovations that are taking place

and reducing room availability. The other is a trend away from M/W/F and higher numbers of T/Th and M/W sessions. This has created difficulties in scheduling classrooms. He described the different models used for scheduling. Model 1 rooms includes 99 general use classrooms that are scheduled by the Registrar's office and cost and maintenance of these rooms is overseen by the LSMC. Model 3 rooms includes 213 classrooms that are owned and scheduled by Departments and the cost and maintenance of these rooms is overseen by individual academic units. Model 2 rooms includes 84 general use rooms that are considered Departmental preference, the Department gets the first choice to schedule the rooms. The rules have changed for the use of model 2 rooms in order to optimize the efficiency of the use of these rooms. The LSMC will take over the cost of renovation these rooms. Thanks to these changes we were able to schedule all rooms this fall, with some difficulty!

Verga talked about her responsibility to manage all the space on campus. We have identified one space management system that will be used across the university. We purchased Archibus as the system and the information is being added. All Schools will be using the same system. All will be able to use it and see how space is utilized. We have started the planning of the 2024/2025 Master Plan with Sasaki Associates Inc. A draft is planned for late 2025.

Bonneau: What is the difference between a Master Plan and the Institutional Master Plan?

Verga: The institutional Master Plan is legally binding and goes into much more detail, and it needs to be updated every 10 years. The Master Plan is more high level.

McCormick: I have a specific question about how space is going to be used in the Parkvale Building

Smith: I do not have any specific information about this building.

Verga: I believe there is a tenant looking at the space.

McCormick: there are unused classrooms in that building that the ELI created, that could be used.

Smith: I will look into this and make the suggestion to others.

There was extensive discussion about scheduling times and how to address early class times. There are several options but these do not get around the basic problem that students do not like 8 am classes. Songer brought up the point that computer labs should be also assessed especially in light of increased enrollment.

Salcido thanked the panel members for their input. We hear a lot about this in the CUPS committee, often out of frustration and there are requests for new buildings of classrooms. It has been very useful to hear from you, and the new software will be helpful.

Some questions were raised concerning research office space as the system seems very cumbersome at the moment through the leasing process.

Verga responded that the Master Plan will be assessing research space available. The leasing process will be the same and goes through the real estate office. The new system will allow individuals to look at university space and utilization.

The concern is that it is not possible to find research office space on campus and the offsite services require very onerous and time consuming documentation of funding etc. Kear suggested that this may be a topic that the research committee could take up.

Kear asked about the scheduling issues in the future.

Coat said that the present issues were worse due to ongoing construction and suggested that in the future will be less onerous.

7. Announcements

Wed. April 3 | 5:30pm | Frick Fine Arts Building, 125

Join documentary film director Kristi Kendall, producer Morgan Twist Garvey, and professor Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili (GSPIA) for a screening and discussion of the new documentary film, UNDIVIDE US. Filmed in Pittsburgh, UNDIVIDE US challenges the idea that citizens who disagree are not capable of civil conversation and demonstrates the truth that, even in our differences, the American experiment is still alive and well. The film is a timely and urgent plea to reclaim the nation's soul through open discourse, civic engagement, and self-governance.

McCormick announced that there is an event on Friday 3 – 4 PM: Voices across borders. Exploring cultural identity, language, and activism in hip hop” at the library.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 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: Balaban, Bircher, Bonneau, Bove, Burton, Caldwell, Cutsumbis, Dallal, Damiani, DiCesaro, Epitropoulos, Fort, Glynn, Guterman, Hall, Heffernan, Jones, Kanthak, Kear, Keown, Lemery, Maier, Massanelli, Mattern, Mauk, McCormick, Molinaro, Morel, Murtazashvili, Paljug, Parker, Reed, Salcido, Schuster, Shephard, Songer, Stoner, Swigonova, Tashbook, Zack

Members not attending: Almarza, Archibald, Bell, Falcione, Ferdinand, Flick, Glass, Good, Holding, Jacobs, Khader, Kohanbash, Kovacs, Lewin, Mahboobin, Melnick, Morris, Nguyen, Pitetti, Potoski, Schmidt, Scott, Shafiq, Skledar, Taboas, Wert, Williams, Wiggins, Wood, Yates

*Excused attendance: Adams, Boulder, Cousins, Dietz, Jenkins, Tudorascu

Others attending: Coat, Conner, De Vallejo, France, Harding, Jones S., Kelley, SantaCasa, Smith G., Verga, Wells

*Notified Senate Office