

FACULTY ASSEMBLY MEEING
Wednesday, November 29, 2023, 3 p.m.
HYBRID
2700 Posvar Hall and VIA ZOOM

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Faculty Assembly Minutes of November 1, 2023

Upon request for corrections to the November 1 minutes, N Bircher proposed a change since it appeared information was missing. Kear noted that they had already been informed of this correction and it was being made. Kear asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. On a motion duly made (Guttermann) and seconded (Melnick) the minutes of the November 1 2023, Faculty Assembly Meeting were approved with the noted amendment.

3. Introduction of Items of New Business

None

4. Report of the President, Robin Kear

I hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving week break.

Provost Search Committee

- The provost search is moving into a confidential phase. Thank you to those that have contributed feedback via the survey or in the listening sessions or put names forward for consideration.

Winter Commencement

- The December 17th Winter commencement is new this year and there has been some concern expressed by students. Due to these concerns, Interim Provost McCarthy has communicated directly with those students affected. Because this is the first year, there is flexibility for students to walk in April if they would prefer it.
 - You can find the communication to students from McCarthy on the winter commencement website. <https://www.commencement.pitt.edu/winter-commencement>

Inclement Weather

- If the University closes, there are numerous communication plans activated, including the emergency notification service, websites, and social media.

- If there is inclement weather and the university is not closing, a friendly reminder to be aware of and discuss inclement weather procedures with your respective school or department before they happen.

University Policy Open for Comment

- There is 1 draft policy open for comment by members of the University community. These drafts will be making their way through shared governance for recommendation.
 - [CS 29 - Vaccine Immunization](#) - Available for comment from 11/6/2023 to 12/4/2023
 - Faculty Affairs Committee; Benefits and Welfare Committee
- Related to the new Vaccinations and Immunizations Policy, the removal of the COVID-19 requirement meant that the decommissioning of Interim Policy CS 29, COVID-19 Vaccination. The decommissioning of this interim policy was up for comment through November 16th.
 - This policy was identified for potential decommissioning because it establishes requirements that are no longer operationally relevant or are no longer aligned with Federal, State, or local guidance.

Decommissioning Policy

- I announced this at Senate Council but I want to repeat it here for you. As they did last spring, the Educational Policies Committee is going to discuss the decommissioning of 5 additional university policies that are related to Provost-area or the Registrar topics. The same thinking prevails as it did in the Spring, that these items should not be University Policy but rather part of guidelines and regulations directly from those areas.
 - If asked, these are related to course meeting times, credit hour, cross registration between regional campuses and Oakland campus, GSA/TA/TF/GSR scholarship procedure, and university cumulative quality point average (QPA) and GPA.
- [Policy RI 02, Consultant Conflict of Interest](#), which was enacted in 1994, has been identified for potential decommissioning because its requirements are now duplicative of other Conflict of Interest Policies, namely RI-01, FN-06, ER-02, and ER-03, and the processes it describes are no longer relevant since the implementation of MyDisclosures.
 - Open for feedback from November 3, 2023 to December 1, 2023.
 - I have shared this information directly with the Research Committee for consideration.
- The Policy Office is soliciting feedback on a proposal to decommission [Policy ER 04, Domestic Partner Benefits](#). The reasoning for decommissioning is that the substance of this Policy is more appropriately covered in OHR and Provost Office materials. Specifically, HR provides information regarding benefit eligibility for faculty and staff's

family members, student health plans, and rules regarding bereavement leave for staff. Additionally, the Office of the Provost provides information for Faculty medical leave.

- You can provide feedback on this proposal through December 18.
- I have shared this information directly with EIADAC and Benefits & Welfare for consideration.

LRDC (Learning Research and Development Center) Director Search

- The Senate is assisting with the voting to elect four members of the search committee for the next LRDC Director.
- Only those identified in this unit will be self-nominating, running for and voting on these spots.

LGBTQIA+ Steering Committee

- I would like to share information about the launch of the University of Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Steering Committee. This Committee is endorsed by Chancellor Gable and charged by Vice Chancellor Pickett to create a central body of faculty, staff, and students to share, report, learn, and assess the opportunities to advance enterprise-wide efforts to improve the climate and culture at the University for the LGBTQIA+ community.
- “While the University is committed to supporting equality, inclusion, and civil rights, including the protections for the LGBTQIA+ community, we know there remains significant work to be done. We are hopeful that through the work of this committee we can make more substantive progress to realize the promise of Pitt for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community.”
- The committee will be comprised of direct appointments, shared governance representatives, as well as representatives from existing LGBTQIA+ organizations. Todd Reeser, faculty member in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, and Angie Bedford-Jack, senior staff member in the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, were appointed as co-chairs.
- EIADAC will appoint a representative to the this steering committee and the Senate will also have one more at-large Faculty Assembly representative.

State Government

- As you may have seen, Pitt did receive its flat funding appropriation from the PA state government in mid-November for FY24. That is good news for all.
- You may have seen the phrase ‘strategic expense reductions’ in the announcement that came out from the administration. I have clarified that existing budgets for this year will remain the same and there won’t be new expense reductions related to the flat funding.

Thank you all for your service and dedication to shared governance. If you are at Senate Council next week I will see you there, but otherwise have a great end of term and wonderful winter break.

Any questions or comments on my report?

???? asked for clarification concerning the new December graduation date. This caused consternation among graduate students in the School of Public Health as there was confusion amongst them as to when they could participate in graduation ceremonies.

After some discussion it was clarified that undergraduates who graduate in December have the choice to participate in the University wide ceremonies in December or April for 2023. Graduate students who graduate in December can choose to graduate December with the undergraduates but there is no University-wide graduation ceremony available for graduate students in April. It was pointed out that the language is ambiguous and suggests that graduate students could choose to walk in April. Kear noted that there is a need to clarify exactly what the situation is and will inform FA at the next meeting.

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

Dependent Care Ad Hoc Committee

Professor Anna Wang-Erickson, Chair

Wang-Erickson presented the report and started by thanking the committee members for their hard work. The report is long but mostly consists of the Appendix which will be useful for future groups looking to implement the policy. She outlined the obstacles that Pitt employees have faced due to Pitt regulations, which prohibited them for using NIH awarded funds for dependent care, even the monies awarded were specifically for this purpose. In addition, she noted that this impacts morale and productivity and that Pitt's posture on this issue was out of sync with peer institutions. The response from the administration has been lukewarm and have not produced the necessary changes despite some modest adjustment of some regulations (details to be found in the report)

The Committee came up with four recommendations:

1. Change FN28 to allow dependent care expenses from all available funding sources (internal and external)
2. Establish a new Dependent Care Voucher fringe benefit
3. Establish a Dependent Care Professional Development Grant
4. Add 1 FTE to Human Resources to administer these new Dependent Care programs. Many other universities have multiple staff dedicated to managing dependent care or work/life programs

Wang-Erickson elaborated on these recommendations, and provided detailed specifics which can be found in the attached policy document and power point presentation.

Questions?

Kear – thank you for your hard work in this area.

Songer: you mention the committee work is continuing. What is happening now?

Kear: the committee is no longer in existence as every ad-hoc committee exists for two years, unless we decide to renew. Anna has left us in a very good position with these recommendations and we will move forward with these through other committees such as Benefits and Welfare.

Taboas suggested the committee get actual numbers for the benefits these changes would have, such as increased productivity, as actuaries can calculate these numbers.

Kear and Wang Erickson agreed that this was a good idea.

Kear will continue to push for these recommendations. Let us know if you support these recommendations. Thanks to you, Anna, for the work that you have put into these issues.

5. Unfinished Business and/or New Business

Pitt IT

Mr. John Duska, Pitt's interim Chief Information Security Officer

Duska presented information concerning the recent phishing emails. To put this into context Pitt blocks 52% of all emails each day, as they are considered malicious. This amounts to over 1 million emails/day. But this is not foolproof, and some emails make it through the filters. We had several recent large scale attacks – one consisting of 370,000 phishing emails all part of one attack. These have become less severe recently. Also these attacks have not been carrying malicious cargo such as ransomware, but this is our greatest concern.

In addition to the filtering we have three measures that we are currently implementing:

- 1: Multifactor authentication (MFA) through Duo is in operation for all accounts, excluding alumni accounts.
2. Anyone who does fall victim to a phishing email is enrolled in our anti-phish training which helps them identify phishing emails and provides additional training.
3. We applied anti-phish filtering to internal Pitt emails – not just external emails. Many of the recent attacks were coming from Pitt emails.

We are looking at three additional measures to help with thus:

1. Reduce the number of alumni email accounts, many of which are never used and there are over 10,000 such accounts. These do not use MFA and thus are easy to compromise. We will enforce MFA on those remaining
2. We will reduce the number of emails/day that can be sent. At present it is set at 10,000/day and this will be restricted to a more realistic number. Exceptions can be made for specific situations.
3. Restrict the use of auto-forwarding from all Pitt emails.

Questions?

Scott: A question concerning the auto-forwarding. I use this as I use a UPMC computer.

Duskas: we are OK with this continuing as UPMC has a good phishing filtering system

Kear: How many of the faculty use the auto-forwarding

Duskas: It is a small percentage of faculty - <10%. The largest number of this practice is alumni as this is 20%

Taboas: one consequence of banning auto-forwarding is that many people might just opt out of the Pitt email.

Bonneau: I agree with this, as I am one of these people who switched over to gmail many years ago. I would suggest that the auto-forwarding ban be implemented with alumni.

Kear: I also agree that this may have consequences on how faculty work and their productivity. I would ask these concerns be considered and maybe there be a more nuanced approach to implementing these changes.

There was further discussion on these issues and several solutions were proposed.

Kear: we appreciate the opportunity to have this discussion before implementation.

Duskas: we also appreciate getting this feedback and we are looking at various solutions as well as the consequences of some of these proposed changes.

Kear – thank you for the presentation. And now we have an update on the winter commencement.

Molinaro: April is only for undergraduates. Each graduate school coordinates their own graduation ceremony.

7. Announcements

Murtazashvili: We are hosting another Pitt United in Compassion event, due to popular demand. This gives an opportunity to come together and celebrate our shared humanity. This will be on December 5th at noon, in the University Club, Ballroom A. There will be lunch and someone will be making a documentary about this and we hope this will be a model for other universities. We should try and get many students to come to this.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 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, Bell, Bircher, Bonneau, Burton, Caldwell, Cutsumbis, Damiani, DiCesaro, Falcione, Fort, Glass, Glynn, Guterman, Hall, Jenkins, Jones, Kanthak, Kear, Keown, Kohanbash, Lemery, Maier, Massanelli, Mattern, Mauk, McCormick, Melnick, Molinaro, Morris, Murtazashvili, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Schuster, Scott, Shafiq, Shephard, Songer, Swigonova, Taboas, Wood, Zack

Members not attending: Adams, Almarza, Archibald, Bratman, Dallal, Dewhirst, Dietz, Epitropoulos, Ferdinand, Flick, Heffernan, Holding, Jacobs, Kaufman, Khader, Kovacs, Lewin, Mahboobin, Morel, Nguyen, Paljug, Potoski, Salcido, Schmidt, Tashbook, Wert, Wiggins, Williams, Yates

*Excused attendance: Boulder, Bove, Cousins, Good, Morel, Stoner, Tudorascu

Others attending: Conner, Duska, Frieze, Jones S., Markovitz, Pirolo, SantaCasa, Stonesifer, Tuttle, Wallace, Wang-Erickson

*Notified Senate Office