

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes
(Hybrid format)
Thursday February 15, 2024**

I. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm and asked those on zoom whose names do not appear on screen to use chat for the roll.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the Past Senate Council Meeting

On a motion duly made (Parker) and seconded (Rodzwick) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on January 18, were approved as written.

III. Items of New Business

No items of new business were raised.

IV. Report of the Chancellor, Joan Gabel - given by Joe McCarthy, interim Provost.

The Chancellor is unable to make this meeting as she is attending the Annual Vanscoy Winter Academy in Florida, along with other senior leaders. A number of health sciences faculty give Ted-like talks to members of the community, including a significant number Pitt Health sciences alumni. This is an occasion where PAE and senior leaders talk with Pitt friends and alumni about science.

Governor Shapiro recently announced a new framework for the education system in the Commonwealth. There is a lot of information to go through here. I want to highlight three new initiatives that are likely to directly impact Pitt:

- 1) Performance based funding for state related universities. Details of this have not yet begun to be developed.
- 2) The overhaul of student aid distribution. This includes an increase in the PHEEA grants that go to students who are resident in the Commonwealth
- 3) Proposed merger of PA state system of higher education with the community colleges across the State

Pitt's office of government relations is working closely with the legislature and the Governor's office on these initiatives to ensure a fair funding system for our students and Pitt's operations.

The Board of Trustees meeting occurred last week. They talked a lot about changes in the Board structure and operations. There was an election for the new chair elect – John Verbanac was elected to serve as the next chair and his term will begin July 1 2024.

The Board elected seven former trustees to serve as emeritus trustees

They also passed a resolution of appreciation for departing SVC and CFO Hari Shastri

The Chancellor also shared the progress of the Plan for Pitt to the Board. There will be a survey coming up, where community feedback will be solicited.

Two new surveys are coming up soon.

- 1) Higher education sexual misconduct and Awareness survey. It is very important to fill this out as this will help guide efforts for prevention of sexual misconduct.
- 2) Survey given to students to provide feedback for research. This is the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey and it is given to undergraduate and graduate students. These is to provide confidential information about their experience in research. Several other

peer universities participate in this survey which helps us to benchmark against peers, and to develop changes and improvements to the programs.

News and Honors

University

- NSF Higher education research and development survey recently came out and Pitt remains in the top twenty in R&D funding and has climbed two spots to be at #16 -in research funding out of 900 institutions. This is due to 10% increase in our research expenditures.
- Pitt was named as top producer of Fulbrights for 2023- 2024 academic year. This marks the 9th time in the last 11 years that Pitt has received this award and there have been 100 Fulbright scholars in that time frame representing Pitt.

Faculty

- Rory Cooper was elected to the National Academy of engineering. Rory is a Distinguished Professor the School of Rehabilitation Sciences. He is a founding member and Director of the Human Engineering Research Laboratory (HERL)
- John Linorelli and Christian Powell Sundquist were elected Fellows of the American Bar Association. This distinguished honor is for licensed attorneys whose careers have demonstrated an outstanding dedication to the highest principles of the legal profession.
- Two Pitt faculty have received prestigious awards for community engagement efforts from the Campus Compact: Jamie Ducar, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Engagement and Community Affairs, and Kirsten Scott, Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project.

Student News

- We have a new initiative out of the Provost's office of Student Success team it is called First at Pitt, helping to support 1st generation students by providing mentoring. This has already attracted 116 would-be mentors and over 100 mentees have been identified.

Finally the Pitt day of giving is coming up soon on Feb 27th. This is longstanding tradition at Pitt that last year attracted over 9000 donors from around the world and resulted in \$2 million in donations to Schools and programs. Please participate in any way you are able.

There were no questions for Interim Provost McCarthy

V. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear *(submitted in written)*

Hello all and welcome back, I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the spring semester.

Senate Plenary

- Thursday March 7th, 2024, in the William Pitt Union Assembly room from 12 noon to 2 pm. Doors open at 12 noon and the program will start at 12:15.
- The topic will be, Bringing Disciplines Together to Solve Big Problems, focused on how this can and does happen here at Pitt and in the Pittsburgh education community.
- Interdisciplinary research and teaching are key to working on society's most thorny issues and to educating our students for a changing and complex future. When we can speak and work across

disciplines to find shared goals and understanding, we are working towards the fundamental mission of higher education, to make a positive impact on our students and our communities. Join us for the Senate Plenary to learn how Pitt does interdisciplinary work well, discuss how Pitt can improve, examine why we are poised to make greater strides, and understand how interdisciplinary work benefits our entire academic ecosystem and communities.

- Speakers:
 - Melissa Bilec, Engineering and co-director of the Mascaro Center for Innovation
 - Shelome Gooden, Linguistics and Assistant VC for Research in the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Related Fields
 - Nicola Foote, Dean of Honors College and professor in GSPIA
 - Lisa Parker, public health, Director of the Center for Bioethics & Health Law, and leader of RESI (Research, Ethics, and Society Initiative)
 - Dave Sanchez, Engineering and Associate Director for the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation
 - Abdesalam Souidi, Linguistics and leader of the Humanities @ Work project, as well as the Creator of Humanities in Health (HinH)
- Immediately adjoining the Plenary, from 2-3 pm in the same space, we are partnering with the Year of Discourse and Dialogue Research Committee to hold a tabling workshop titled: 'How to Interdisciplinary'. Join us for an interactive workshop to discuss how we can co-create programs and infrastructure to support communication across the disciplines at Pitt. The workshop is meant for researchers currently engaged in interdisciplinary work and for those who seek interdisciplinary teams, but don't yet know where to look. The workshop is meant as a kickoff event for a future working group focused on cultivating opportunities to cross disciplinary silos and to communicate across the disciplines. Faculty, staff, and students are welcome to attend. Thanks to Kris Kanthak for leading this effort.

Senate 2024 Elections

- An email went out to all faculty on January 23rd soliciting interest in Senate Elections.
- The available positions for election this year are:
 - Officer of the Senate: Secretary (two-year position)
 - Member of Faculty Assembly (three-year position) for units with a representative whose term is expiring.
 - Member of a Standing Committee (three-year position) – 3 positions on each committee
- To quote Lori, we have had a “fabulous response”.
- In late February, the senate committee for elections will review the responses. This is chaired by the past president of the senate.

Provost's memo on DEI and CES in Tenure & Promotion

- As you know, last month we were excited to announce the memo from the Provost's office detailing guidance related to Community Engaged Scholarship and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in promotion & tenure processes.
- I hope that you were able to share the information with your respective areas and your school's shared governance leadership.

- Now begins the work of supporting this guidance in its implementation, from the administration and from us. I have approached the Faculty Affairs Committee with some ideas on how the Senate can assist.

Testing Accommodations Issues

- At last month's Faculty Assembly, I described pressures on the DRS (Disability and Resource Services) Testing Center. They have frequently been at capacity, especially during peak testing times and are looking for ways to mitigate that pressure. Suggestions and options emailed to high-use classes were not mandatory and were meant to help find any flexibility.
- Since then, I have talked with Interim Provost McCarthy to discuss the issue and the next steps. There are various short and long term solutions being discussed, including more resources for the Testing Center in the short term.
- The email message that went out on February 7th was a routine message to any instructor that has a student with a DRS accommodation in their class/classes.
- Discussion of this issue will continue in the Senate Educational Policies Committee at their next meeting on February 23rd at 9 am, on the Senate calendar.
 - The Zoom info is on the Committee webpage under Meetings.

University Policy Open for Comment

- There is 1 Policy open for comment.
- [Policy FN 29 - Unit Level Payments to Research Participants and Students](#)
 - available for comment from February 8, 2024 to March 7, 2024
 - This had a policy charter under a slightly different name 'Using Stored Value Cards and Electronic Payments Policy'
 - Will be reviewed by the Research Committee

Feedback on Plan for Pitt

- Please do take a moment to respond to Chancellor Gabel's call earlier this week for feedback on the Plan for Pitt.

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

Any questions or comments on my report?

VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

A. Student Government Board (SGB), Ryan Young

DeJong: Thanks to SGB for your collaboration on making the campus more user friendly. We appreciate the heads-up on the accessibility buttons, Not only are they now fixed but now our Police will be routinely checking the buttons. We are going to start populating the campus with QR codes that anyone can use to send a message the facilities management directly when issues, such a problem in a bathroom, are spotted.

Young: thank you for working us on that

Songer what are the current student activity fees?

Young: They are \$100/semester, so \$200/year. These fees are split amongst various activities, including our allocations process and PittNews as well as student groups. We have seen twice as much demand for club allocation, asking to increase it to \$120.

Kear: I want to thank you for highlighting your work with with CUPS on the AEDs. Thank for bringing that up and working with committee on that.

B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Ally Riggle

Hi everyone! My name is Ally Riggle, and I am a General Board Member on the College of General Studies Student Government Board. As an active member of CGSSG, I also serve on the CGS Council and the University's Budget Policies Committee. I will be providing our report today in replace of Skyler, as she is traveling to attend a law school admitted students day!

I know at your last meeting Skyler went over CGSSG's entire event calendar from January until graduation, so I plan to keep this short and sweet.

Our logo contest, where CGS students have the chance to design and submit an original logo to become the new face of CGSSG is in full swing! We have received several submissions, and we are hoping this continues until the deadline at the end of this month.

We have also officially secured dates for the SAFE self-defense classes with the Pitt Police! They will be held on both March 7th and March 25th and can hold up to fourteen students per class. I participated in one of these classes last year and absolutely loved it!

I know that Skyler had previously mentioned that CGSSG was working on planning a larger event for CGS students this spring, and I am happy to announce that we have decided to host a silent disco open to all Pitt students! The University held one for the incoming freshmen class during orientation week and the students really enjoyed it, so that is what we decided would be best and attract the most attention. It will be held on April 11th from 7:00-9:30 in the William Pitt Union! We can't wait!

Lastly, CGSSG is working on sending out our annual Student Climate Survey next week. We split the survey up into two sections: the first being student awareness of CGSSG and our goal here on campus, and the second being a focus on student demographics. Overall, we are trying to gauge what students want to see from us next year: whether this be placing a stronger emphasis on class availability, networking and job placement opportunities, social events, etc!

As for new information that Skyler did not cover in your last meeting, this is pretty much all that I have for now.

No questions.

C. Graduate and Professional Schools Student Government (GPSG), Claire Dunning.

Hello everyone, I am Claire Dunning, the current Executive Administrator for GPSG, and I will be giving the report this month.

- Our Penguins Happy Hour is selling well, and we only have a few tickets left! This will be an exciting way to get students out of Oakland to have a good time watching a hockey game and enjoying delicious food. We look forward to seeing all of the student support a local team on February 20th

- The Wellness Team will be joining us for our upcoming Assembly Board meeting on Feb 21st, and we hope to collaborate with them on improving graduate students' well-being. We plan on
- We recently began a donation drive with Pitt Pantry and the graduate and professional schools where the top 3 schools participating will receive a monetary prize to help with their student activities. The donation drive will end by March, and we hope to announce the winner at our March Assembly Board Meeting.
- Graduate Appreciation Week is the first week of April, and we are excited for all the fun events planned for students. GPSG will be hosting some events that week, including trivia, a BBQ with burgers, chicken, and veggie burgers, and yoga on the lawn.
- Our Spring Fling in early April is mostly all set, and we can't wait until tickets start selling.

We have three major applications currently open: the 2024-2025 GPSG Executive Board Officers, Leadership and Service Awards, and the next Executive Administrator. By April, we expect to have the winners and a new Executive Administrator declared. We are currently working with university administration to reach as large an audience as possible to fill these positions and awardees.

- Our elections begin in March. Right now, we are holding a Call for Candidates so that students can send us their information and we can see if they are eligible to campaign. Due to the timing of Spring Break, students will get two weeks of campaigning time, whether through their socials or flyers, which should help inform voters about who they are voting for in this election.
- The Leadership and Service Awards Applications are now open, and we look forward to providing students with the opportunity to share their experiences and receive recognition for their hard work. These awards will grant students no-strings attached \$250 grants. The review board will have both faculty and students decide the awardees.
- The 2024-2025 Executive Administrator position is also now open for graduate and professional students. This is a GSA position that will provide a great experience for students looking for an academic appointment within Pitt and who wish to be part of GPSG.

Thank you for your time.

VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Rachael Rush

The majority of our focus has been on planning the 17th annual University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Research Symposium (formally known as the Data & Dine event) that will take place in the William Pitt Union from 2-5 pm on April 15th. We are still collecting donations from various departments and institutes to fund professional development awards for winners of the poster session. As there are currently no other professional development awards specifically designated for postdocs at Pitt, we are hopeful to continue this tradition. We are also seeking nominations for the three special awards given out at this event: the postdoc alumni, advocacy, and mentor awards. We encourage departments to support their postdocs' participation in this event and encourage everyone to attend to hear about some of the great work going on at Pitt.

The UPPDA is also organizing a session as a part of the Mentoring and Advising Summit organized by the Provost's office focused on mentoring postdocs. This virtual summit will take place on March 8th.

We are continuing to hold in person social events for postdocs to connect with the larger community, and last month held a successful winter “fun”derland boardgame night. We welcome and input or suggestions for future events.

We look forward to our upcoming events including:

- Our Career Conversation series with postdoc alumni from Pitt
- Our president and international committee chair attending the National Postdoc Association meeting next month in Seattle
- Hosting a World Culture Diversity Day potluck in May

This concludes our short report and please as always feel free to reach out with any thoughts or feedback regarding postdocs at Pitt.

VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Lindsay Rodzicz *(submitted in written)*

Good afternoon. I thought I'd start with reminding everyone of the celebration of **Black History Month**. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has a great, consolidate line-up of the events being held across campus on their website. [K. Leroy Irvis Black History Month Celebration | Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | University of Pittsburgh](#)

We wanted to express our **thanks and appreciation to Hari Sastry**, CFO. On behalf of University of Pittsburgh Staff Council officers and members, thank you for your commitment, service, and dedication to University staff. Your expertise and leadership have brought forth many initiatives that have directly benefitted and impacted University staff. Thank you for your collaboration in shared governance. We wish you the best of luck in your next adventure at Georgetown University!

Awards: We wanted to call attention to one specific recent staff award.

Congratulations to Yvonne Brewster Way in the Department of Surgery who received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award. The Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support citizen warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families, and granting leaves of absence if needed. [Yvonne Brewster Way Receives Patriot Award | Department of Surgery | University of Pittsburgh](#)

Staff Council Highlights from the Last Month:

- Thanks to everyone who joined us this morning for the **Staff Council Spotlight with Pat Narduzzi, the Chris Bickell '97 Head Football Coach**. In case you missed it and want to learn more about Coach Narduzzi personally and his career, the recording will be available on our website.
[Coffee and Conversation and Staff Council Spotlight Sessions | Staff Council | University of Pittsburgh](#)
- **We have several great upcoming Staff Council Events:**

- a. **The Next Staff Council Spotlight is February 26th at noon on Zoom with the Vaccination and Health Connection Hub.** This offers an opportunity to learn about the health services offered and how the Hub integrates innovative and interprofessional education.

- b. **With Pitt Day of Giving on 2.27.24**
 - i. Please remember Staff Council as you plan out your Pitt Day of Giving donations. This year, we'll be focusing on the Employee Emergency Fund, as well as our other worthy funds. Click [here](#) for more details. [Employee Emergency Fund | Human Resources | University of Pittsburgh](#)

Since the fund opened in October 2023, HR has disbursed \$76,888 as of 1/19/2024 to 62 employees. The Emergency Fund is truly making an impact to help our colleagues who are experiencing substantial hardship and we hope you will consider donating.

- c. **Coffee and Conversations:**
The next Coffee & Conversations is with **Kris Davitt, Senior Vice Chancellor for Philanthropic & Alumni Engagement**, University of Pittsburgh and Chief Development Officers, UPMC

Thursday, February 29 from 10:30am – 11:00am in the William Pitt Union, Kurtzman Room.

Join us for coffee and hear Kris Davitt talk about her life and career at Pitt.

Register [here](#). *The schedule for the rest of the Spring is:*

March – Ted Fritz, VC for Public Safety and Emergency Management

April – Anatha Shekhar, SVC for Health Sciences

May – Carla Panzella, Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

- d. **If anyone is looking to take in a Pens Game – Pitt Night at PPG is on March 5.** The link to buy tickets was in our last newsletter. <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/PenguinsCollegeNightPitt030524>

- e. **Spring Counsel of Campuses is set for March 13.** This is a closed meeting with the Staff Council leadership from the Regional Campuses.

- f. We're collaborating with Athletics for some fun things for staff at the Pitt Football Blue and Gold Game Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 2 p.m. More details to come!

- g. **Save the Date for our Staff Council Spring Assembly on May 8.** It will focus on Lifestyle Benefits and the vast offerings that are a part of what make Pitt a great

place to work. There will be great opportunities to discuss some often overlooked discounts like PittArts Cheap Seats discounted Cultural District tickets.

- h. Our next **OPEN SC General Meeting** will be next Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 pm via Zoom.

If you have any questions, please email sc@pitt.edu

Register Here:

https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_82jGwkUwae37XUi

All are welcome to any of our events and you can register through the Pitt Events Calendar!

As President Kear and interim Provost McCarthy mentioned, Chancellor Gabel gave updates to the Board on the **Plan for Pitt**. Staff Council is working to amplify the message and encourage staff participation on the feedback survey.

This concludes our report. Thank you.

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

FERPA: Access to and Disclosure of Education Records

Professors Bonnie Falcione & John Stoner, EPC Co-Chairs

Stoner presented the revised policy now 04. The existing policy was last revised in 2008, 2009. The committee was cochaired by Jonathan Helm, University Registrar, and Laurel Gift, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Compliance Investigation and Ethics. The committee first met in February 2023 and was comprised of a broad range of stakeholders from staff and faculty. The committee did extensive benchmarking of how our peer universities had updated their policies. We then had extensive discussions on the implications of the definition of terms and how that might impact Pitt's new policy. When we started this process, Jonathan and Laurel wanted us to accomplish three things; The first is that FERPA is a federal regulation, so we had to get that part right. The second was that we wanted to modernize and update the policy and, third, to create a policy that is notable for robustly protecting student information. The committee then turned to a discussion of the procedure and the training that should be required in terms of FERPA.

The EPC passed the policy and procedure unanimously

It was presented to Faculty Assembly last week and some concerns raised about privacy were raised.

This were handled very ably by Jonathan and Laurel. The policy and procedure were approved by Faculty Assembly.

Any Questions?

Rodzwicz: Is there a communication planned on how to get these changes in training requirements to the staff?

Gift: We are organizing a training plan that will be used by faculty and staff – will include what the new policy requires. Previously FERPA training was very ad-hoc and one aim is to make it more widely available, easy to use and trackable. One the aims of the changes was to increase awareness and make this easier to track. My office is a resource to all of you for these issues.

Vote: Yes 39; No 1; Abstain 1.

The policy and procedure are approved.

X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:

None

XI. Announcements

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 PM.

Documents from the meeting are available at the University Senate website:

<https://www.univsenate.pitt.edu/senate-council>

Respectfully submitted,
Penelope (Penny) Morel
Secretary, University Senate

Members attending: Adams, Bell, Bonneau, Boulder, Burton, Cousins, Cutsumbis, Dallal, Damiani, DeJong, Fitzpatrick, Gregerson, Hart, Jenkins, Kanthak, Kear, Kelley, Massanelli, Mauk, Mayer, McCarthy, McCormick, McCullough, Melnick, Molinaro, Morel, Murtazashvili, Nguyen, Panzella, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Rodzwick, Rush, Rutenbar, Sastry, Scott, Shafiq, Siddiqui, Songer, Stoner, Washington, Young

Members not attending: Almarza, Archibald, Behera, Jacobs, Kohanbash, Lemery, Lewin, Mahboobin, Morris, Potoski, Schmidt, Swigonova

*Excused attendance: Cheevers, Fort, Gabel, Jones, Shekhar, Tudorascu

Others attending: Bernotas, Brown, Conner, Dostilio, Ducar, Dunning, Gallaher, Gift, Harding, Helm, Hitter, Hoogendorn, Houser, Issermoyer, Jackson, Jones S., LaBar, Lancia, Pickett, Rai, Richelieu, Riggle, Roadman, SantaCasa, Staresinic, Stonesifer, Supowitz, Wells

*Notified Senate Office