

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes
(Hybrid format)
Thursday March 21, 2024**

I. Call to Order

President Robin Kear called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm.

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

On a motion duly made (Adams) and seconded (Parker) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on February 15, were approved as written.

III. Items of New Business

No items of new business were raised.

IV. Report of Senate President, Robin Kear (*submitted in writing*)

Hello all and welcome back, I hope you are all doing well. I hope you enjoyed spring break last week. It did not really feel like a break to me, except for Friday.

Provost Announcement

- Another congratulations to Joe McCarthy on becoming our next Provost. I think he is an excellent choice to be our next Provost and I look forward to our continued partnership.
- Again, it was my pleasure to be part of a great search committee, I learned so much from the other members.

Senate Plenary

- We held the Senate Plenary just before spring break on Thursday March 7th, 2024, in the William Pitt Union Assembly room from 12 noon to 2 pm.
- The topic, Bringing Disciplines Together to Solve Big Problems, allowed for great discussion of how this work does happen here successfully and how it can be improved. In his summary, Provost McCarthy noted that he had a lot of work to do.
- Thank you again to our six great speakers: Melissa Bilec; Shelome Gooden; Nicola Foote; Lisa Parker; Dave Sanchez; and Abdesalam Soudi.
- Thank you to Kris Kanthak for running the tabling workshop immediately adjoining the Plenary, thanks to the Year of Discourse and Dialogue Research Committee. 'How to Interdisciplinary'. This workshop allowed us to change gears and think about the work differently, it was very engaging.
- An immense thanks to Lori Molinaro and Linda SantaCasa for their work planning and administering the plenary.

Senate 2024 Elections

- In late February, the Senate committee for elections met to review the self-nominations and the slates. This is chaired by the past president of the senate.
- 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.
- 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

On Zoom

- (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 costs depending on the need.
- We should all expect to continue using Zoom as we have been.
- SCITC will hear from Pitt IT if you want to ask further questions on Monday March 25th at 1 pm.

Committee Work

- I want to commend our Senate committees and the work that our chairs and members accomplish throughout the year. A few recent highlights out of committees:
 - While working with EIADAC, Budget Polices voted to change the data reporting from the Provost’s Office for faculty salaries by gender equity to a greater frequency, every other year instead of every third year, starting later this Spring. This salary data report will also now include faculty salary equity by race and be intersectional as well. The goal is to better monitor and alleviate differentials.
 - EIADAC is working with Staff Council and HR to receive the same salary equity data for staff by gender and race on the years in between the faculty data.
 - Faculty affairs addressed a question around tax exemption and will hear from CFO representatives at a future meeting.

Testing Accommodations Issues

- Discussion of this issue continued in the Senate Educational Policies Committee at their meeting on February 23rd, including examination of the data, and short and long term solutions.
- We had a lengthier discussion of the testing center at the last Faculty Assembly, and if you have questions please reach out to the Educational Policies Committee.
- I am encouraged by the attention this issue is receiving and I think there will be progress.

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.
- They start on March 20th and there are 9 sessions for faculty/staff through April 22nd. Visit <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/general-education-reform-task-force/gen-ed-task-force-events> their website to register.

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?

Siddiqui: I just wanted to make a comment about the plenary. We attended and we really enjoyed it and found it very valuable and we wanted to thank the organizers of the event.

Kear: Thank you for attending it was nice to see you there.

V. Report of the Chancellor, Joan Gabel

I am sorry for being late.

I wanted to add my congratulations to Joe McCarthy as our new Provost. We had a rigorous national search and interviewed some great candidates. I am very pleased with the outcome and Joe and I have been working together over the last few months and I am very optimistic about the future. Thank you to all who participated in the committee, and thanks to Anantha Shekar for chairing the committee

We have a lot of searches underway, including for three Deans, and two leadership positions.

Dean of the Swanson School of Engineering Search: There are some very good applicants and interviews of the finalists are underway.

Dean of the School of Education; interviews of the finalists will be starting soon.

Dean of the School of Law: the search committee is working and the position description is being developed.

Vice Provost of student affairs interviews will begin soon

Chief Financial Officer search: the search committee is being formed in order to start the search.

Strategic plan update is on schedule. We presented to the Board in early February on the values will translate into actions. In April we will begin the last phase and we will come back to you for feedback. This has been a very valuable exercise for me – I could not have asked for a better to learn from the community, and I want to thank everyone for that

Last month I testified in Harrisburg at a budget hearing of the House Appropriations Committee. – testified budget committee. It was my first time here and I was honored to represent Pitt and to

advocate for our needs and our students who benefit from the six decades of appropriations to the University. I also talked about our accessibility and affordability goals in the strategic plan and how we plan to implement them. We had two days there. There are two more days in late April.

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While we there, other Pitt students were there and it was an unofficial Pitt day of sorts. The Institute of Politics had students shadowing, so we met about 10 students who were in legislator offices. There were 6 Honors College students presenting posters on their research. I saw one of those students at the Leadership dinner at the house last night, and he said it was an excellent day. Dean Betsy Farmer told me there were social work students at the Governor's house that night

In April the volley ball team will be going to Harrisburg and the legislators are excited to meet them. I will meet with other legislators at future meetings, The conversations varied widely, with some focused on issues relevant to their districts. Some were focused on the needs of the university, others had specific research questions, many were very interested to talk about basketball. They were all very pleasant conversations. Our students were great ambassadors, which is no surprise. I look forward to more conversation and to continue to tell how the partnership with the Commonwealth directly enables Commonwealth students to benefit from affordable education at the University.

Budget hearings will continue and we expect a highly debated budget. We also have the Governor's proposal, which was also discussed in many of these conversations. The devil will be in the details and we are very curious as to how this will unfold. We are intrigued as to how that will affect us as it takes shape.

We are delighted to report that there is great demand for Pitt with another record number of applicants applying to Pitt this year.

Rankings;

This year we ranked 19 among worldwide universities in utility patents this year.

According to the list published by the National Academy of Inventors and the Times Education World Reputation rankings have us ranked #44 nationally and #22 among the AAU publics.

University news

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences has a launched a Chiropractic program. It is a first among research intensive schools and the only one in Pennsylvania. It reflects some very forward thinking in allied health, broad thinking in intersectional health and how health care is evolving.

We recently had Pitt Day of giving, We had a record number of individual donors, at 11,473 donors including staff, faculty, alumni and friends from around the world including 50 states, 25 countries and 5 continents. We raised \$2.4 million for scholarships, student organizations, research, athletics and other university activities

Student Accolades

A team of students from the School of Law won the 2024 National Tax Moot Court competition.

A PhD student in Geology and Environmental Sciences was awarded a Mendenhall research fellowship from the US Geological Services.

Undergrads have recently earned the Lionel Pierson Fellowship, a Dick Thornburgh Forum Disability Service award, two Critical Language scholarships and the ACC diving championship.

Faculty awards.

Two from the medical school were named Members of the National Academy of Inventors.

Exceptional faculty were recently awarded the Distinguished Chancellor's awards in Research Teaching and Service.

Those and many other honorees will be honored at the Faculty Honors convocation starting at 3PM on April 5th at the Carnegie Music Hall. As a small part of that there will be a brief Chancellor Installation Ceremony.

The University-wide commencement will take place on Saturday April 28th at the Peterson Event Center

Questions?

VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:

A. Student Government Board (SGB), Ryan Young

- I hope everyone has been having a great March, even with the very chilly weather!
- First, I want to start off by congratulating Provost-pending-Board-of-Trustees-Approval McCarthy! We are thrilled to see him take on the role and hope to continue to work with him to improve Pitt!
- This week, we hosted a town hall with the Provost's General Education Task Force! Dr. Torres engaged with students and heard from audience members about how they would like to see Pitt improve our general education requirements
- We co-hosted the "Reproductive Justice, Health, and Rights Convention", including a keynote from the President of Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania
- The Community and Governmental Relations Committee and the Renter's First Ad Hoc hosted more renting workshops, co-hosted "Tenant Town Halls", and met with Councilman Bob Charland about student renting in Pittsburgh
- Vice President of Operations Siddiqui and I have begun working with the Student Organization Resource Center to implement a program for large student organizations to have private outside bank accounts for funding
- Our Academic Affairs Committee hosted our annual Majors and Minors Fair, which had representation from many academic departments at Pitt allowing students to hear about new opportunities
- We hosted our annual "Women in Politics Panel" with community members from around Pittsburgh to discuss female experiences in their political careers, including representation on the panel from Dr. Kanthak
- Student Affairs approved our proposal for a student leader panel to hear petitions for new remunerated student leader positions to better fund leaders of organizations outside of student government, and we expect to launch petitions this week.
- Vice President of Initiatives Fitzpatrick has been continuing to work with facilities to guarantee that the accessibility buttons around campus that open doors are working well. We were really happy to see facilities respond so quickly to get posted information at every button about what to do when a button fails to work — information I've personally used to get a button fixed recently!

- We have begun the work on a proposal for a dedicated non-voting Student Trustee to serve on this Board to better represent students in our administration and are currently in conversation with the Secretary of the Board on advancing this idea
- Our Facilities, Transportation, and Technology Committee co-hosted our annual “Spring Safety Fair” to connect students with representation from over 20 University departments
- Working with student organizations and the Allegheny County Health Department to install accessible and private Naloxone cabinets around campus
- Immediately after this Senate Council, we will be hosting a Food Accessibility Town Hall on how the University community can work to support both students and long-term residents living in a food swamp without a grocery store
- We are wrapping up our working within our Allocations Policy and Procedure Task Force, which is working to implement new policies and fix issues within our Allocations manual that governs our club funding Allocations process
- Finally, I want to wrap up by introducing our President-elect, Sarah Mayer! Sarah is a Junior Neuroscience and Psychology Major who currently serves as Vice President of Policy. I have happily known Sarah since her freshman year — she was one of my residents when I was an RA in Sutherland — and she is the reason I joined SGB last year. I cannot think of a better student to step into this role next year, so without further ado, I’ll pass it over to her right now to introduce both herself and her Board-elect!

Hi everyone!

My name is Sarah Mayer, I use she/her pronouns, and I’m a junior majoring in Neuroscience and Psychology. I am thrilled to address the Senate Council today as the Student Government Board President-elect. Common themes over the course of this campaign season include sustainability initiatives, support for accommodations and accessibility, and integrating inclusivity spaces across campus, among many other wonderful initiatives. I’m extremely honored and excited to serve the Student Government Board and continue to share our passions and pursuits over the next year. I’m happy to announce the 2024-2025 Student Government Board:

1. Lauren Rubovitz, a sophomore Politics and Philosophy major, and current Communications Director
2. Maddie McCann Colvard, a sophomore Finance major, and current Allocations Chair
3. Ashley White, a junior Psychology major, and current Board Member, liaising to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee
4. Katie Emmert, a junior Political Science and Law, Criminal Justice and Society major, and Current Board Member, liaising to the Wellness and Support, Advocacy and Prevention Committees
5. Sanai Overton, a sophomore Political Science and Psychology major, and current Wellness Chair
6. Mercy Akanmu, a freshman Neuroscience and History and Philosophy of Science major, and current First Year Council and Academic Affairs committee member
7. Evan Lasseur, a freshman Public Health major, and current First Year Council and Academic Affairs committee member.
8. Neal Gupta, a freshman Biology major, and current First Year Council and DEI committee member

This board represents many facets of our student body: members from all years, different schools within the University, we have RAs, student workers, and we have people from within-SGB and a part of other organizations. I am delighted to join this board and anticipate an

amazing year.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with you all next year!

Bonneau: I noticed that all of the positions were uncontested, why is that?

Young: There were a number of factors at play. One was that all of the people on the current board are really enthusiastic and dedicated to their positions. I am really happy with the board we have. We do encourage students to run for these positions but they are often uncontested.

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

No report

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

No report

VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Rachael Rush – report was provided in writing.

We are gearing up for 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. This is the only university-wide postdoc-focused event at Pitt, which offers professional development awards for top poster presenters. We will also be giving out three special awards at this event: the postdoc alumni, advocacy, and mentor awards. We hope departments support their postdocs' participation in this event and encourage everyone to attend to hear about some of the great research going on at Pitt.

Earlier this month, members of our board participated in the Mentoring and Advising Summit sponsored by the provost office. We led a panel discussion focused on mentoring postdocs, with a focus on setting expectations, communication, leadership, and managing career transitions.

Two of our board members (President Rachael Rush and International Committee Chair Diego R. Hernandez Espinosa) attended that National Postdoc Association meeting in Seattle last week, representing the approximately 850 postdocs at Pitt. We were able to network with other postdoc association leaders and attend various sessions focused on postdoc training and support. We look forward to implementing what we learned to promote postdoc success here at Pitt.

We are excited to hold elections for next year's board in April and encourage interested postdocs to reach out to the past position holder to learn more about the position.

We continue to hold in person social events to bridge postdocs across campus, and look forward to our upcoming events including:

- Our Career Conversation series with postdoc alumni from Pitt
- Hosting a World Culture Diversity Day potluck in May

This concludes my report and as always please feel free to reach out.

VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Lindsay Rodzicz

- Congrats to Joe McCarthy on being named Provost. We look forward to continuing to work with you in shared governance.
- **Staff Council Highlights from the Last Month:**
 - a. Membership passed an updated **Statement in Support of our LGBTQIA+ community**. We will be circulated that in the upcoming weeks.
 - b. Interviews underway for recruitment of our **Staff Council Manager position**. We hope to introduce to you all our new staff member at the April meeting.
 - c. Held **Council of Campuses** on Wednesday, March 13 via Zoom and had a productive conversation with the officers from the regional Staff Councils.
 - d. Thank you to all of our members who participated and gave in **Pitt Day of Giving**. And thank you to EJ Milarski-Veenis and Erica Carson for leading the efforts. We raised almost **\$4,000 from 102** donors for our funds. We look forward to discussing with our partners here in shared governance how to sustain the new **Employee Emergency Fund**.
- **We have several great upcoming Staff Council Events and Activities:**
 - a. Applications for all three **Staff Council Awards** are now open. These are all incredible opportunities that provide funding for Books for Pitt Students whose parent is a staff member, professional development opportunities and recognize mentoring success.
 - b. 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!
 - c. **April 18: Coffee and Conversations** with Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences and Dean of School of Medicine, Dr. Anantha Shekhar
 - d. **April 22: Staff Council Spotlight** on Disability Resources Services with Leigh Culley, Director, DRS. More details to come.
 - e. **Continue to 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. We're hopeful that it works out for Chancellor Gabel to join us!
 - f. Our **Kennywood** planning committee commences this month. If anyone would like to participate or partner with SC Please let Kristen Felser know if you would like to join the planning committee @ kmf9@pitt.edu. Remember to Save the Date for Saturday, June 22, 2024.
 - g. Our next **OPEN SC General Meeting** will be next Wednesday, April 17, 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!

This concludes our report. Thank you.

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

Assistance Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets Policy
Professor Bridget Keown, EIADAC Co-Chair

Keown introduced herself and presented the Service Animal policy. Tony Graham and Leigh Culley presented the policy to the EIADAC committee on February 9th 2024. They described the multiple discussions and edits that went into formulating and strengthening this policy. We came to understand that this policy was a long time in preparation due to changes necessitated by the COVID pandemic and also because the committee came to realize the various roles that animals play on campus. We appreciated the efforts that committee put into defining these roles and also the limits of their presence on campus. They were able to answer a number of questions raised by members of the EIADAC committee and Leigh also noted that there will be an FAQ built as a result of queries that came out of the public comments on the policy. These will provide answers to some of the broader questions. The policy was considered sustainable for the future by the committee. The committee voted to approve the policy on a quorum vote.

Faculty Assembly discussed the policy on March 6th and some typos were corrected. Three changes in wording were also suggested and these were adopted as they did not change the nature of the policy. The discussion highlighted the strength of the policy and provided further clarification to questions raised by members of Faculty Assembly. The policy was voted on and was passed by Faculty Assembly.

Kear: Thank you for this. Are there any questions or discussion?
There were no questions.

Vote:

Yes: 32; No 0; Abstain 2.

The policy was approved.

X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:
None

XI. Announcements
None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 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, Almarza, Bell, Bonneau, Boulder, Dallal, Damiani, DeJong, Fort, Gabel, Jenkins, Kanthak, Kear, Kelley, Lemery, Mayer, McCarthy, McCormick, McCullough, Molinaro, Morel, Morris, Murtazashvili, Nguyen, Panzella, Parker, Pitetti, Reed, Rodzwick, Scott, Shafiq, Shekhar, Siddiqui, Songer, Stoner, Wingrove, Young

Members not attending: Archibald, Burton, Cutsumbis, Fitzpatrick, Gregerson, Jacobs, Kohanbash, Lewin, Mahboobin, Mauk, Melnick, Potoski, Rutenbar, Schmidt, Swigonova, Tudorascu, Washington

*Excused attendance: Behera, Cheevers, Cousins, Hart, Jones, Massanelli, Rush

Others attending: Bernotas, Brown, Conner, Culley, Culpepper, Dostilio, Ducar, Fike, Gallaher, Graham, Halderman, Harding, Hitter, Houser, Jones S., Kelley, Keown, Mayer, Pickett, Ridge, Roadman, Rose, SantaCasa, Schackner, Staresinic, Sterne, Stonesifer, Supowitz, Wells, Wilson

*Notified Senate Office