

Senate Community Relations Committee Meeting
12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Room 109, Parran Hall
December 13, 2011

Attendees: G. Reynolds Clark, Vice Chancellor of Community Initiatives; Denise Chisholm, SHRS; Laurie Cohen, ULS, CRC Co-Chair; Sabina Deitrick, GSPIA; David Givens, GPSA; Peter Hart, University Times; Linda Hartman, HSLS; Reba Landry, Social Work student; Patrick Loughlin, Bioengineering; Tracy Soska, Social Work; Martha Ann Terry, GSPH, CRC Co-Chair; Gwen Watkins, Special Events Coordinator, Community Relations.

Old Business: Minutes from CRC meeting of October 18, 2011. Distributed and approved after correction of some typographical errors.

Co-Chair Remarks: Co-Chair Martha Ann Terry reported on the University Senate Faculty Assembly meeting of November 1, 2011. Reports were given by the Athletics Committee and the Anti-discriminatory Policies Committee. The Athletics Committee reported that Pitt is leaving the Big East athletic conference and moving to the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). Part of the committee's report lauded the University for its support of student athletes, through funds gained by Pitt's participation in bowl games. The Anti-discriminatory Policies Committee reported that they are looking into the provision of health insurance for transgender employees, something currently not offered by UPMC's health plan.

New Business: Recent correspondence from Carlino Giampolo to CRC members was shared. Patrick Loughlin asked for some historical context regarding the issues. The Committee discussed Brian O'Neill's *Post-Gazette* article about Oakland (December 11, 2011), other issues raised by community and/or University members (e.g., litter, fireworks, noise, etc.), and the process the CRC uses for sharing information with the University Community Relations office. A list of ongoing community projects will be shared at the next CRC meeting.

University Updates: Renny Clark reported that the Salk Hall expansion project is currently on hold due to stability issues, and the new dorm construction is proceeding. There has been some discussion between the Port Authority and Oakland stakeholders about a Bus Rapid Transit project which would come through Oakland on its way to downtown Pittsburgh, stopping at Pitt, Mercy Hospital, Duquesne, and Downtown. The bus would not stop at every corner, but at some designated stops along the way. Using new technologies, riders would be able to pre-pay for their trips and book them ahead of time. New three-door buses would be used, and CMU has created a smartphone app for determining real-time arrival of buses.

There was also a report of large groups of students coming to the Chancellor's office to thank him for not accepting the raise he was given this year from the Board of Trustees. They also asked him to try to convince other administrators to follow his lead and donate their raises, in addition to requesting that he not raise tuition this year. The chancellor

stated that he did not want the students to have to bear the entire weight of the budget cuts imposed by the state.

Student Updates: David Givens reported that the GPSA recently worked with the Pitt Men's Study, helping them raise over \$3500 for HIV/AIDS awareness and community support. Funds were donated to Shepherd Wellness Community Center. The group also raised \$250 from graduate student contributions for Toys for Tots. The National Association for Graduate Students is considering holding their 2013 convention here, so GPSA would be heavily involved in planning for that.

Martha Ann Terry mentioned that the CRC's recommendation of student committee members' status as pro-tem members has been forwarded to the University Senate. The CRC's new mission statement will be forwarded to the University Senate after some corrections have been made.

The guest speaker for this month's meeting was Reba Landry, a second year Master's of Social Work student, who is studying community organizing. Reba has created a community advocacy group called Students with Disabilities & Allies, and she reported on their recent meeting in December, and handed out a transcript from the meeting. They are working on raising awareness of issues like accessibility on campus, physical barriers, attitudes towards disabilities, etc. The group is trying to become a recognized student group at Pitt, and David Givens offered his assistance to Reba's group.

Linda Hartman has also offered assistance in terms of providing entry to Senate meetings and awareness of the group. Some of the other CRC members made recommendations about people to network with, including Joan Stein, Linda Dickerson, and Joe Fink. The issue of housing for students with disabilities came up, and Renny recommended speaking to John Wilds, who worked on this in the past. Renny invited Reba's group to attend Oakland Task Force meetings, and Tracy asked whether other student groups would be open to meeting with Reba and her advocacy group.

Community Service Events: Gwen Watkins reported that there was a very positive response to the Project Bundle-Up project, and more than 40 volunteers prepared packages for Christmas Day at Pitt. More than 1500 pairs of hats and gloves were donated this year.

Future Meetings:

Next CRC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2012, from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. in 207 Hillman Library.