

**Senate Community Relations Committee meeting**  
**12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Room 272, Hillman Library**  
**June 19, 2012**

**Attendees:** Bryant Andrews-Nino, OPDC; Whitney Bosnyak, Oakland Planning and Development Corporation; Denise Chisholm, SHRS; Laurie Cohen, ULS, Co-Chair, CRC; Mary Davidson, Oakland Business Improvement District; Marian Hampton, ULS; Peter Hart, *University Times*; Linda Hartman, HSLs; Jess Netto, CHS; Trevor Smith, CHS; Martha Ann Terry, GSPH, Co-Chair, CRC; Patricia Weiss, HSLs, Senate Liaison; John Wilds, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community Relations.

**Co-Chair Remarks:** Just a short recap of our visit to UCSUR last month. We learned about new projects they are undertaking and had a tour of other properties in Oakland, including the future location for OPDC's JobLinks and School 2 Career Center at Semple and Louisa Streets. There was also some discussion about converting space on the ground floor of the Eureka Building into a coffee shop.

We are looking at the schedule for future meetings of the CRC, and trying to accommodate those members who haven't been able to attend due to teaching conflicts. You will get a Doodle questionnaire through e-mail to choose an alternative day/time for our meetings. Hopefully, we can come to a better arrangement for next year. We are also looking into an alternative venue for some of our meetings.

**University Update:** John Wilds updated us on construction projects around campus. Buff-colored bricks are scheduled to go up on the new freshman dorm across from the Book Center. The work on the Graduate School of Public Health addition is proceeding at a rapid pace, and all of the structural work has been completed. Work is also underway on the Salk Hall renovation, which is a five-story project, and will include lab space, along with offices for the School of Dental Medicine and Pharmacy.

Repaving was recently done on Bigelow, Craig, and Baird streets. The Book Center is emptying for its renovation project, which will take about one year. Their swing space will be at Got Used Bookstore on Forbes Avenue. Following the construction of the new dorm on Fifth & Bigelow, University Place will become a two-way street, with a new railing on the Fifth Avenue side of the street. John reported that he will be meeting with local community groups to identify projects for this year's Day of Caring event and Pitt Make a Difference Day.

**Community Partners:** Whitney Bosnyak reported that Saturday was their kick-off event at The Corner, with a bake sale, vendors, line-dancing lessons, etc. There is now a Calendar of Events for The Corner, and the Neighborhood Council is meeting regularly. You can find out more at:  
<http://www.cornerpgh.org/>

Bryant Andrews-Nino from OPDC introduced himself to the committee and talked about some of the programs he has been working on. Last weekend OPDC held the Love Your Block event. They won a grant from Home Depot and had 55 volunteers clearing vines and weeds from Louisa Street near the police station. Teams of six to eight also cleaned and cleared the neighborhood around South Bouquet Street. They planted, mulched, removed ivy, and cleaned streets.

Bryant has also been working on planning training for Resident Advisors, to help students with the transition from dorms to off-campus housing. He spoke about instilling the pride of living in Oakland, along with educating them about their rights as tenants. He would like to get all of the key players together for training sessions, and give RAs the tools they need to work with students.

OPDC is working on designing a refrigerator magnet explaining trash collection information, with telephone numbers and rules. It could have a QR code they could scan into their smart phones, with links to the OPDC site. Another idea is to distribute a flyer with local businesses listed on it, along with a list of the Top 5 Party Fouls.

John Wilds commented that Bryant's role is one of many methods Pitt is using to make sure students are aware of the need to be good Oakland citizens, in terms of partying and other behaviors. As a result of many meetings with students, the Community Relations Office developed the Be a Good Neighbor program, and they are working with Pitt's Freshman Experience Program. The Student Code of Conduct, which is distributed to all students, will contain a section outlining student responsibilities as Oakland residents.

A few people asked Bryant about the timing of the RA training sessions. Denise Chisholm suggested that this information could be forwarded to specific academic programs, with the Graduate and Professional Student Association as another target audience. Tracy Soska suggested that orientation sessions for graduate students could be advertised at the information tables set up at the graduate student fairs, which take place in August.

Trevor Smith and Jess Netto spoke about the Oakland Food Pantry and the new catering service offered by the Smile 'N Dine. They also mentioned their interest in increasing student awareness of the Food Pantry. John mentioned that the Dean of Students could help distribute that information. Denise said that information about this could be advertised at Pitt's Financial Aid Office. Tracy agreed that this should be heavily publicized, especially since Pitt supports the pantry and helped to establish it. Tracy said that the Bachelor's in Social Work Club could work on marketing the service and also that it would present a nice service learning opportunity for a class.

Pat Weiss brought up the issue of people assuming that most of the food there is canned, but Trevor said that most of the food is fresh from the Food Bank. Tracy mentioned that they could also use the pet food as a hook to get students in. Mary Davidson of OBID reminded us that the first Oakland Farmer's market of the season opens next week. The first Friday of each month also features an Artist Series of objects for sale. The hours run from 3:00 to 6:30 through November.

**New Business:** Tracy brought up the issue of looking at Hazelwood for future community relations opportunities. There are lots of activities taking place there, including the extension of the bike trail, and it is fairly close to Oakland. It is a community of need as identified by the Heinz Endowments, who are focusing their efforts on the neighborhood. They have recently completed a Strategic Plan. One issue is the lack of good public transportation from Oakland to Hazelwood. Our committee will take a site visit to Hazelwood in October, which John and Tracy will organize.

Bryant mentioned some more activities he is planning, including an Oakland Pride event (PMAD) with t-shirts and a mingling of students and community members. He is trying to get SGB involved, too. The concept of Oakland walking tours with John Wallace was also discussed, along with a scavenger hunt quiz with OCC credit for students. This led to the suggestion of a CRC meeting with student representatives and members of the Commonwealth Relations Committee. John reported that the regional campuses have given him a large list of their community activities to add to the 225 Acts of Caring calendar.

John reported on the University's appropriation situation. There is support from the Republican caucus to restore Pitt's initial funding before the cuts were suggested. This was approved by the Senate and is currently in the House. The budget should be passed by the end of June. Hopefully, all of some of the funds will be restored, in which case, Pitt cannot raise tuition by more than the Consumer Price Index rate of 3.2%.

So far, more than 300 staff applied for the early retirement deal offered by the university. Regarding the Town Center project in Oak Hill, construction for the building, known as The Commons, has started. There is no lease, but it should be completed by the end of December. The community will have 3000 square feet of space and 20,000 square feet will be used by the Health and Physical Activity Department.

Submitted July 23, 2012  
Laurie Cohen and Marian Hampton