

**Senate Council Meeting Minutes  
(Hybrid format)  
Thursday April 11, 2024**

**I. Call to Order**

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

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

On a motion duly made (Stoner) and seconded (Songer) the minutes from the Senate Council meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, were approved as written.

**III. Items of New Business**

No items of new business were raised.

**IV. Report of the Chancellor, Joan Gabel**

I will start by Congratulating Joe McCarthy as he has been officially approved as our new Provost. I also want to congratulate our new Board Secretary, Phil Bakken who will join us June 28<sup>th</sup>, and was approved. He brings a lot of experience to the role, having been Secretary in the University of Nebraska system. Many thanks to Paul Supowitz, Geovette Washington and Tom Hitter who have stepped in during the interim period.

Other leadership searches are underway and moving forward.

Dean Searches:

Swanson School of Engineering. The search is nearing completion and should be completed by the end of the semester.

School of Education. The search is nearing completion and should be completed by the end of the semester.

School of Law. The search committee has been formed and the search will begin by the end of the semester.

Vice Provost for Student Affairs: this is also on track and we are starting the interview process. The search for a new CFO is in the early stages.

It is Harrisburg season. Provost McCarthy was there yesterday, One hundred students from the School of Pharmacy were there recently for a Pennsylvania Pharmacists Legislative Day. Students met with lawmakers and stakeholders to discuss pending legislation. Presidents from the regional campuses were there on Tuesday to advocate for state appropriation and the importance of the work that they do. They were joined by the Pitt Women's volleyball team, who were honored with a special legislative citation for their remarkable success over the past several seasons. This honor was bestowed on Senate floor and was a special moment for the University and our students. Today, Speaker McClinton was on campus speaker with representatives from SGB.

Finally, I will let Joe McCarthy talk as he was appointed on the Governor's work group that will be looking into the new proposals the Governor made for higher education, and in particular the performance-based funding formula and how this will affect us, as State related universities.

As you know we have extended our Year of Discourse and Dialogue into next year. This is very important to align with the Plan for Pitt. Many thanks to all involved in this. We had a very good workshop last week exploring Academic Freedom and freedom of expression, showcasing projects funded by the Year

of Discourse and Dialogue initiative. It was very insightful and ahead of the curve for this to be topic this year and it remains highly relevant.

There is a strong demand in admissions and have crossed the 60,000 applications mark, which is a record. This is happening amid all of the FAFSA challenges and we are “in the soup”, waiting for the FAFSA data from the government. This is hard for us but also really hard for the students who are waiting for the news of their financial aid package. We had 3000 students come through admitted students day but we still have 6000 students scheduled to come through. We still do not know when we will set the date for students to commit and pay their deposits. We will keep you posted.

Commencement | April 28<sup>th</sup> and congratulations to all of senior students and we are honored to have been part of your educational journey. The Commencement speaker is John Surma who is a member of the Board, prior head of US Steel and now Chair of the board at UPMC. His family has strong roots in Pittsburgh and at Pitt and he has an inspiring story to tell, that not many people know.

Some Honors to announce:

Students;

Two of our undergraduates, Oluwatofunmi Abiola and Richard Fang, were named Goldwater Scholars.

Eight Pitt graduate student earned NSF research fellowships.

A 2021 alum earned a Pickering Fellowship from the Department of State.

Faculty:

Two of our faculty, Paul Palevsky and Douglas White, were elected to the Association of American Physicians

We honored our faculty during Faculty Convocation of Friday and I was honored to go through the official Chancellor installation ceremony. A big shout out to the Office of Special Events who organized a great event.

I want to give a brief update on the strategic planning at this time.

The board has seen the proposal for the next stage of the Plan for Pitt and they have endorsed it and so we can now really start to move this forward and plan the measures we will use to monitor our success. The Chancellor outlined the process used to develop the Plan for Pitt, and what measure will be used to monitor and tell the story. She showed one of the approaches to be used which is a dashboard that outlines that progress in each of the five pillars of the Plan for Pitt. The dashboard can be found on the website of the Office of the Chancellor [here](#). The other side of this is to determine whether we are achieving our goals using a Progress Card, which shows us how our plan is progressing and will inform administrative decisions, in consultation with all of you, the board and other stakeholders. The chancellor showed examples for each strategic plan goal, of how this would look with columns representing, the desired outcome, the starting baseline, the target, and key initiatives designed to achieve those targets. These will help the Board see where we are going and helps the administration in future planning. Concerning the pillar “we will be welcoming and engaged” the Chancellor highlighted that this is not only about having a representative student body and faculty but also includes the impact that the university has in the community, buying goods and services. The university will be instituting regular surveys of students and staff that can be followed chronologically and benchmarked against other peer universities. The chancellor also highlighted aspects in providing accountability and trust. This will increase transparency of the budgeting process and streamline our operations. This streamlining will not include any layoffs as we are not overstaffed at the university. The Chancellor also highlighted the “Its Possible at Pitt” which demonstrates the really unique things and opportunities here

at Pitt. This card provides a space for these efforts to gain attention and provide an opportunity to showcase the projects and people who are involved.

There were no more questions for Chancellor Gabel.

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

Hello all and welcome back to senate council, I hope you are all doing well as we near the end of the term with its celebrations and transitions.

I traveled west on Monday to a lake in Ohio to witness the totality of the solar eclipse. It was a transformative experience. It exceeds the hype. I had a deep emotional response that I did not anticipate. It was a community experience, uplifting, and optimistic, a melding of the spiritual and scientific. I can't say enough superlatives about its meaning to me. So, in honor of Dave DeJong's tradition, and with his support, I was inspired to try my first ever haiku. (Keep in mind I am not a practiced creative writer.)

Glowing White and Blue  
Beauty Unexpectedly  
Truly transcending

**Chancellor's Installation and Faculty Honors**

- Congratulations again to Chancellor Gabel on her installation ceremony last week, and congratulations to all those faculty who received awards. It was a lovely all around event.

**Plan for Pitt**

- I encourage you to take a look at the new dashboard and progress cards for the Plan for Pitt. There was a presentation by the Chancellor at the public Board of Trustees meeting last Thursday that is on the Pitt YouTube channel.

**Academic Calendar for Fall 2024**

- As I mentioned last week at Faculty Assembly, our Educational Policies Committee discussed a concern about the end of the upcoming Fall term and the Academic Calendar. There is what I would call a December squish between Thanksgiving being late in November and giving students enough time to finish projects and get ready for finals in a reasonable time frame.
- I urge you to take a look at the end of the fall term now, as a consideration for planning your fall classes. This was also reported in the University Times.
- As you requested last week, there will be more communication coming out from the Provost's office and Dean's offices.

**Senate 2024 Elections**

- Please vote.
- 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.

### **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.
- I want to stress that I see this process as taking our existing puzzle pieces and perhaps fitting them together differently for the benefit of our students. I do not see this process as reinventing everything that already exists within the schools. I think it is good to take a holistic approach to our general education, to examine how it is working, and to make it easier for students to see connections between their disciplinary learning and more universal educational goals.
- You will be able to fill in a survey on their website, this survey will be active following the completion of a CBA for our unionized faculty. Otherwise, you can reach out to members of the Task Force (listed on the website) or to John Stoner, our Senate representative.
- They started on March 20<sup>th</sup> and there are 9 sessions for faculty/staff through April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Visit their website to register.

### **Extension of the Year of Discourse and Dialogue**

- I attended the 2023-24 Year of Discourse & Dialogue Capstone Event last Friday, Developing Capacity for Discourse and Dialogue Across Our Campuses. This was a wonderful event organized by the committee.
- Provost McCarthy and Chancellor Gabel have decided that to extend the Year of Discourse and Dialogue to continue through the academic year 2024-25. Carissa Slotterback, Dean of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and Clyde Pickett, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, will continue to lead the 2024-25 Year of Discourse and Dialogue.
- These efforts have been successful this year, there is always more to do, and are very important in our continual work to balance the responsibilities of free speech and diverse viewpoints on our intellectually varied and vibrant campus.

## **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?

### Presentation of the Award for Service in the University Senate

#### **John Stoner**

This year's Senate Service Award is presented to John Stoner. John has a decade-long record of involvement in the work of the University Senate. He has been a:

- Member of Faculty Assembly, 2014-present
- Member of Senate Educational Policies Committee, 2016-present. Co-Chair of EPC, 2019-present
- Member of Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on non-tenure-stream (NTS) faculty, 2015-2017
- Member of Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on Evaluation and Assessment of Faculty Teaching, 2016-2017

John is a generous and compassionate colleague; I immensely enjoy talking and working through issues with him. He provides focused and articulate analysis in his leadership roles. He is willing to listen and take in new information. He always works towards making Pitt a better place. Thank you for your efforts. Congratulations John!

A photo was taken

Stoner: I would like to say that when, as individuals and as an institution, we are at our best it when we have a shared vision of what Pitt should be as it moves through the world. That shared vision involves students, who are not only prepared to become experts in their professional fields but also critical citizens of a society and world that faces different existential challenges from the one that my generation faced. One of our taglines should be "From the people who brought you the polio vaccine", but more recently thinking about community engagement and how the CECs with Lina and her team have sought to redress some of the historical challenges and grievances of the contacts between the University and its most immediate neighbors. I will remain committed to shared governance so that we continue to provide a world class education, that we continue to make it possible for our colleagues to perform cutting edge research that will make the word a better place and ensuring that our community welcomes and benefits from our presence both at the individual and collective level. Thank you very much!

Bonneau: I just want to thank John for all of his service over the years. I have enjoyed working with him over the years. He has always put the interests of students first and foremost.

**VI. Reports of Student Members of Senate Council:**

**A. Student Government Board (SGB), Ryan Young**

- Ryan Young: We just came from a meeting with Speaker Joanna McClinton! We have a great discussion covering topics including the cost of higher education and protecting trans youth in PA.
- We hosted our Food Accessibility Town Hall which brought together students and administration for an open conversation about addressing food insecurity on campus. We were very happy with the conversation we were able to have and look forward to maintaining active communication around this topic with other student leaders going forward!
- We are continuing our work with student organizations and the Allegheny County Health Department to install accessible and private Naloxone cabinets around campus, and are currently working to develop a proposal with the organization Students for Sensible Drug Policy
- We had a meeting with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid on recruiting diverse students to the university to follow up on our meeting over the summer in the wake of the supreme court ruling. We hope to continue our dialogue and to uplift efforts to find alternate ways to keep Pitt both diverse and representative of the community it is embedded in.
- Next week, we will be hosting programming to serve as an alternative space for students while some incoming prominent speakers are on campus. This event is a collaboration with a number of organizations including Planned Parenthood Generation Action, the Rainbow Alliance, and SAFE peer educators, and we hope it will serve to provide much-needed, medically accurate information to help students support survivors and learn about bodily autonomy.
- Additionally, we have been collaborating to produce a number of events recently, including a Prevention Picnic and a workshop on sexuality, as well as other initiatives including a comprehensive survivor support infographic and peer survivor support network, both in collaboration with Prevention@Pitt!
- This Friday, April 12th 11am-3pm we will be hosting a Global Food Market in the WPU plaza, with various food trucks and student organizations providing flavors from around the world. Be sure to stop by!
- Last week, we hosted a Town Hall on Student Protest with Vice Chancellor Pickett and Dean Slotterback as part of the Year of Discourse and Dialogue. We had a very productive conversation about how to safely and effectively have your voice heard on campus and how to collaborate with administration to promote your ideas. We also had student representatives lead parts of the April 5th “Developing Capacity for Discourse and Dialogue Across Our Campuses” event which went very well.
- After this Senate Council, we will be finalizing our remunerations proposal to pay more student leaders for the work they do in our community. This process was led by students representing various remunerated positions on campus, and we are really excited to have had this opportunity to support a diverse group of student organizations.

- Allocations
  - This week, we heard Spring Budgets, which allows organizations to get funding for events in the next Fiscal Year.
  - We are also finalizing our working within our Allocations Policy and Procedure Task Force! We have introduced a bill to implement the changes recommended by the task force and hope to see it pass the Board and the Committee next week! Some big changes include a complete reformatting and rewriting to make it more usable and understandable, some smaller caps on conferences and competitions have been raised, and our speaker honoraria cap has been lowered, among many other changes. The full bill and a summary document of the changes is available on our website! We have gotten some feedback from student orgs about these changes and we are making edits and revisions as necessary to accommodate their concerns!
- Over the last few weeks we have been highly engaged in our transition, so this report is a little shorter than usual! I'd like to first pass it off to President-elect Mayer to give some updates on our transition.
- Sarah Mayer: Hi everyone. My name is Sarah Mayer, I use she/her pronouns and I'm the incoming President of SGB. Over the past two weeks we have been deep in our transition process as Ryan referenced. Last weekend and into this week we conducted over 30 interviews to fill our Cabinet and Constitutional Committee chair positions. This weekend we will be interviewing for our Constitutional Committee member positions, including the Judicial, Elections, and Allocations Committee.
- In addition, we released the student storage application for spaces in the WPU and O'Hara student Center. As of today, we have received just about 70 applications. We will be voting on these applications in the near future. Incoming Board members are continuing to develop the initiatives that they aim to pursue and we are all preparing for SGB Inauguration next week! I just wanted to take a minute to give thanks to you all for our experience in Senate Council this year! I look forward to more conversation and collaboration in the coming year.

Several other members of SGB expressed their gratitude for their service on Senate Council and how much they enjoyed the experience of shared governance and said their goodbyes to the Senate. Council.

**B. College of General Studies Student Government (CGSSG), Skyler Cheevers**

No questions.

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

Hello everyone, I am Claire Dunning, GPSSG's Executive Administrator. This will be the last report I give as I am graduating in 2 weeks!

Even as we move into the final stretch of the academic year, there is still much to be excited about, such as the beautiful weather and graduation.

- GPSG has finished up most of the events, but we still have an upcoming massage therapy event for graduate and professional students, and we are excited to treat our students to a nice way to relax as everyone gets close to finals week.
- We had a very successful Graduate Student Appreciation Week! Unfortunately, we had to move our BBQ inside due to the weather, but many students came, and the food was delicious. Our Trivia Night was nice and competitive, and winners received some nice merchandise. We wrapped up the week with our annual Spring Fling, which was a massive success and students have been praising it so we look forward to having it again next year.
- We wrapped up the elections for the 2024-2025 GPSG Executive Board and were able to fill every position. Our goal for the elections this year was to receive more votes than last year, and we were able to reach that goal! We will train with them so that they are prepared for when they start May 1st. They will be inaugurated next Wednesday!
- GPSG's GSA appointment has also been filled. The applicant pool was full of excellent graduate and professional students from all 14 schools, so it was a difficult decision to make, but we are satisfied with our choice, and we look forward to her success.
- The GPSG Leadership and Service Awards 4 finalists have been selected and the ceremony for recognizing their leadership and service will be on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 after our last Assembly Board meeting of the semester. These 4 winners will receive a \$250 grant each to use toward supporting their academics and can be used at any time before the student graduates.

Please look forward to our 2024-2025 Executive Board and all they will accomplish! That is all that we have to announce and thank you for your time.

No questions.

**VII. Report of the President of the Postdoctoral Association, Rachael Rush** (submitted in writing)

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual University of Pittsburgh Postdoctoral Research Symposium (formally known as the Data & Dine event) will take place next week in the William Pitt Union from 2-5 pm on April 15<sup>th</sup>. We have 130 poster presenters lined up to present their work, and thanks to the contributions from academic departments and institutes around campus, we will offer \$500 professional development awards for top poster presenters. We are also providing professional headshots thanks to the support from Dr. Godley and the office of the provost.

The UPPDA Executive board would also like to announce the winners of three special awards which will be presented at this event:

- The Postdoc Mentor Award will be given to Dr. Michele Levine, a professor in the Department of Psychiatry
- The Postdoc Alumni Award will be given to Dr. Mohammadreza Tabary, a postdoctoral associate from the Department of Medicine Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine
- The Postdoc Advocacy Award will be given to Dr. Ian Sigal, an associate professor in the Department of Ophthalmology and Department of Bioengineering



This is a university-wide event with participation from multiple schools and departments. We encourage everyone to please attend to support the great work being done by postdocs around Pitt. We also have various faculty and senior postdocs serving as judges as well, we thank everyone for their time and efforts and are excited for this event!

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

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

#### **VIII. Report of the President of the Staff Council, Caitlin McCullough (*submitted in writing*) Senate President Kear, Chancellor Gabel and Members –**

**We also want to say congrats to our upcoming April graduates**, including those here with us from SGB, CGSSG, and GPSG. Echoing the chancellor a bit, thanks in advance to all those in the Pitt community including staff who make the graduation festivities possible! It's always such an exciting and rewarding time of year.

**We would also like to offer congratulations to the Chancellor** on your formal installation as the 19th Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh last week. We appreciated the update you provided on the **Plan for Pitt** during last Thursday's Board of Trustees public meeting. And thank you, also, for incorporating feedback and providing additional information today. We're excited, as it continues to progress, for each member of our community to see themselves reflected in the Plan, while also feeling a sense of opportunity and optimism about what's possible at Pitt.

Lots of **Staff Awards** to note. Kudos to all those who have been recognized and we will only mention a few:

- a. [Provost's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising | Office of the Provost | University of Pittsburgh](#)
  - i. **Amy Evans, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences**
  - ii. **Adrian Gonzales, School of Public Health**
- b. [University of Pittsburgh School of Education on LinkedIn: Our annual Dean's Distinguished Awards recognize the outstanding...](#)
  - i. **Above & Beyond Award: Our own Staff Council former officer - Tammeka Banks.**
- c. This year SHRS initiated 4 Dean's STAFF Awards. They have always had faculty and teaching awards, but this is the first year they have recognized staff in an award format! The 4 recipients include two of our own SC members:
  - i. **Jessica Thomas** received the Debora L. Miller Award of Leadership and Operations. **Anastasia White** received the Commitment to Equity to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Award.
  - ii. Laura Waterstram received the Research and Scholarly Activity Mission Administration Award.
  - iii. Joyce Broadwick received the Student Impact Award.

#### **A big highlight from the last month:**

- a. We have hired a new **Staff Council Manager**. **Bob Slepsky** will be starting with us on Monday, April 29. We are very excited to have that position filled and look forward to Bob starting with us and onboarding him in what is an updated job description and an improved plan for the position.

#### **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 (book fund closes today), professional development opportunities and recognize mentoring success. For all three we consistently get a lot of really deserving applications.
- 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. Staff pre-game field passes are "sold-out", but we'll have a table from 11am-1pm at the corner of Art Rooney and General Robinson if anyone wants to stop by and say hello!  
<https://pittsburghpanthers.com/news/2024/4/8/football-details-for-saturdays-pitt-blue-gold-spring-game.aspx>
- c. **Join us IN PERSON on Thursday, April 18: Coffee and Conversations** with Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences and Dean of School of Medicine, Dr. Anantha Shekhar at 11:30 in Alumni Hall, Connelly Ballroom. Followed on May 2 at 10:30am in the WPU Kurtzman Room with Dr. Carla Panzella, Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.
- d. **Join us on Zoom on April 22 at 12 noon: Staff Council Spotlight** with Leigh Culley, Director, DRS. The session is titled "Empowering Staff for Inclusive Excellence – Navigating Disability Resources and Services".
- e. **Staff Council Spring Assembly "Perks of Working for Pitt" will be on May 8 at 12noon at the William Pitt Union.** That is focused on the lifestyle benefits that we have access to here as Pitt staff – including some of the things that we sometimes forget about or are hard to keep track of. **We're excited to announce that Chancellor Gabel will be joining us!**
- f. Our Kennywood Committee is in full planning mode. **Save the Date for Pitt Day at Kennywood** on Saturday, June 22, 2024. Be on the lookout for the link to purchase tickets later this month!
- 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](mailto:sc@pitt.edu)

Register Here: [https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_82jGwkUwae37XUi](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**

None

**X. Unfinished Business and/or New Business:**

None

**XI. Announcements**

Kear: There is one more meeting of Faculty Assembly and Senate Council in May

**XII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 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, Bonneau, Burton, Cheevers, Cousins, Dallal, DeJong, Fitzpatrick, Fort, Gabel, Gregerson, Hart, Kanthak, Kear, Lemery, Massanelli, Mauk, Mayer McCarthy, McCormick, McCullough, Melnick, Molinaro, Murtazashvili, Nguyen, Panzella, Pitetti, Reed, Rodzicz, Rutenbar, Scott, Shafiq, Shekhar Siddiqui, Songer, Stoner, Washington, Wingrove, Young

Members not attending: Almarza, Archibald, Behera, Bell, Cutsumbis, Jacobs, Jenkins, Kohanbash, Lewin, Mahboobin, Morris, Potoski, Rush, Schmidt, Swigonova

\*Excused attendance: Boulder, Damiani, Jones, Kelley, Morel, Parker, Tudorascu

Others attending: Ayars, Conner, Dostilio, Dunning, Finder, Fritz, Gallaher, Haldeman, Harding, Hitter, Houser, S. Jones, M. Kelley, LaBar, Lancaster, Pickett, Richelieu, Roadman, Rose, Solie, Staresinic, Sterne, Stonesifer, Supowitz, Thomas, Wells

\*Notified Senate Office