

Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes  
University Club Ballroom A  
November 3, 2010

<b>Topic/Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>
<u>Call to Order.</u> President Michael R. Pinsky called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.	The meeting commenced.
<u>Approval of the Minutes of the October 5, 2010 Faculty Assembly Meeting.</u> President Pinsky asked for approval of the minutes of the October 5, 2010 Faculty Assembly meeting.	The minutes were approved as written.
<u>Introduction of Items of New Business.</u> President Pinsky asked if there were any new items of business to be brought forward.	No new items of business were presented.
<p><u>Report of the President.</u> President Pinsky gave the following report: He thanked Vice President Pat Weiss for chairing the October Senate Council meeting in his absence. Senate Secretary Laura Fonzi is absent due to the birth of her first child; daughter Nina, mother and baby are both doing well. Schedule permitting, Lisa Bernardo has volunteered to substitute for Laura while she is on maternity leave. With the local and national elections now over, one thing is clear – the political climate and economic stress that will be felt over the next two years will only intensify, thus we need to ensure that our core values of quality teaching, academic advancement and defense of our collective university community remain our highest priorities. Though we look to the Chancellor for leadership, our council is needed and appreciated. These will be interesting times for us and require that our faculty be committed, vigilant and engaged.</p> <p>The Fall Plenary held on October 26<sup>th</sup> was a rousing success. It was organized by Katz Professor Audrey Murrell, had opening remarks from the Chancellor, comments from Micah Toll, a young mechanical engineering student from the class of 2011, Professor Rory Cooper (SHRS) was the keynote speaker, followed by a panel discussion moderated by Tracy Soska, panelists included Max Miller, Laura Atkinson Schaefer and Ann Dugan, closing remarks were given by Provost Beeson.</p> <p>Presently, a spring plenary has not been finalized but we do have some potential topics being developed and we definitely have a topic for the fall Plenary 2011. If any member of the faculty has an idea for an upcoming Plenary, please let me or other Senate Officers know of your interest ASAP, as these sessions do take time to plan.</p> <p>As part of our Continuing Community Engagement activities (COPC) and the School of Social Work will hold a CERTS forum on “The Oakland Neighborhood and Comprehensive Plan Initiative” on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11:30-1:00 in room 2017 Cathedral of Learning. There will be a light lunch provided. Presentations will be given by Wanda Wilson, Executive Director Oakland Planning and Development Corp. and Adrienne Walnoha, Executive Director Community Human</p>	President Pinsky’s report was approved and submitted.

<p>Services.</p> <p>Professor Nick Bircher and the University Senate Outreach group has finalized their Power Point slide set for faculty to use in their presentations. The slides will be sent to all members of Faculty Assembly this week via email.</p> <p>The Senate Commonwealth Relations Committee has scheduled two lunches this month, Friday, November 12 at the Pitt Bradford campus and the guest speaker will be Rep. Kathy Rapp, transportation will be provided. On Friday, November 19, in 1201 Bruce Hall, Senator John Pippy will be in attendance. If interested, please contact Cindy Brendel at 4-6504 or <a href="mailto:cindyb@pitt.edu">cindyb@pitt.edu</a>.</p> <p>The November 23<sup>rd</sup> Faculty Assembly meeting may be cancelled if there is not pressing Senate business. You will be notified at least a week in advance. President Pinsky concluded his report and asked for questions or comments.</p> <p>Professor Slimick commented that it was his understanding that administrators are not allowed to attend the Commonwealth Relations luncheons, they are not open to administrators. President Pinsky commented that he did not know there were specific limitations. Co-Chair of the Commonwealth Relations Committee, Rodger Beatty commented he had never heard of such a thing, but will look into the situation. He thought it was always open to anyone on campus.</p>	
<p><u>Reports by and Announcements of Special and Standing Committees of the Senate.</u></p> <p><u>Admissions &amp; Student Aid Committee</u> Professor Susan Shaiman, Chair</p> <p>Began by providing a summary of the recent admissions activity of the past academic years. This information was provided by Dr. Betsy Porter. The University is getting a stronger profile of student applying and also getting a stronger profile of student that is matriculating. This is based on information including SAT scores, high school grade point average and class rank when it's available. This past year, we admitted slightly over 50% of the people who applied. The number of students in the top 10% of their class has increased in previous years, high school grade point average of the freshman class continues to increase, SAT scores continue to increase and the eligibility for students to get into the Honors College is increasing. We have such a high profile of matriculating students that it is becoming more difficult to get into the Honors College.</p> <p>In terms of geographic diversity, most of our students are from Pennsylvania, that is our primary target group, however we are beginning to expand, both nationally and internationally. One of the things that is an issue for recruiting of students is that demographic information in PA is indicating that there will be a decline in the</p>	<p>No unfinished business and/or new business.</p>

number of high school graduates in PA over the next 5-10 years; which means we will have to do more active recruiting outside of Pennsylvania.

This is the second year in a row that we are overenrolled. More students accepted our offers and we have a larger freshman class both this year and last year. One of the interesting things from the data, is the high profile student, who has a lot of options from various universities and used to go to another university is now choosing to come to Pitt. We have a higher quality of student.

Over the past two years, the Senate Admissions Committee has been focusing on retention. This is retention of first time freshmen, from the freshmen year to the sophomore year. Currently retention is at 92.7% which is quite good, but the University is trying to reach 94%, this is a University wide effort. In terms of reasons why we lose students following the freshman year, this information comes predominantly from Dr. Juan Manfredi, who is the Associate Provost for undergraduate studies and this is based on surveys done by the Office of Residence Life and UCSUR, among other sources. Surprisingly it is not academic difficulty that is the primary reason, but it is a factor.

There are many other issues, sometimes financial, sometimes health related, sometimes a significant other is at a different school; there is no clear cut reason why we don't retain students. Last year our committee invited Dr. Kathy Humphrey, Vice Provost and Dean of Students to talk about Student Life issues related to retention and we also spoke to Carrie Sparks from the Provost's Office about best practices in academic retention. One of the things that becomes evident is there are a lot of services the university provides, but students are not necessarily accessing in a timely manner. What is evident from best practices is if we keep a student happy and satisfied through Thanksgiving, they are more likely to return. There are a lot of efforts out there to contact students and it would be wonderful to have some degree of faculty involvement from a student life perspective.

These are some of the issues that our committee is discussing, and trying to look into ways we as faculty can help improve student life issues. There are also academic issues of what makes a student at risk, and faculty involvement is identified in the best practices research as one of the primary things that can help in identifying at risk students and getting them services. Faculty are very busy, and it is hard to think of how we as faculty may get involved, the university is exploring dates based solutions for example Course Web or People Soft that will help faculty identify students who are at risk. Things as simple as paying attention to attendance, if you have a student who in the first 5-6 weeks has missed class three times, there is a good indication we are going to lose that student. There are things we as faculty need to be paying attention to, and our committee is trying to figure out where is the most efficient use of faculty resources in trying to help. At the last Faculty Assembly meeting, there was a discussion on student

preparedness. That is something that our committee is interested in from the freshman to sophomore perspective, we are interested in it from a retention perspective but it clearly intersects with a lot of things going on at the university. I'm in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Chairs of the Senate Educational Policies and Student Affairs Committees and seeing if we can set a common agenda across our committees for how we can get faculty more involved without tapping into too much of their time. Possibly a future Plenary down the road. Professor Shaiman asked for comments/questions. Professor Close asked if the information provided was only for the Oakland campus and Professor Shaiman responded yes only for the Oakland campus. President Pinsky mentioned an article that referred to "the call", which is when college students call their parents in late October/early November saying "I'm homesick, I hate it, I want to come home"; there is a national effort in universities to be able to head off the need for "the call". Professor Shaiman mentioned that the Office of Residence Life is looking for faculty to help make calls to freshmen to see how they are doing before "the call" home and to help provide support and resources. There are resources in place trying to head off that call. President Pinsky asked about the 7% of freshmen who do leave, do they fall into a certain demographic that would allow us to target this group? Shaiman responded that it is across the board and no particular demographic. Professor C. Singh asked about the exclusion of the students into the Honors College, that Dean Alec Stewart had a policy that no one would be excluded from the Honors College, Stewart was very welcoming. He did not exclude anyone from taking Honors College courses. Shaiman responded that when students apply, if they meet certain pre-established criteria, they are automatically brought into the Honors College as freshmen and get an advisor through the Honors College; however students after their freshmen year if they meet certain criteria are permitted to participate and take courses in the Honors College. Professor Singh asked if this was a recent change, for Alec was much more flexible with letting students take classes. Professor Savoia mentioned it has always been the case, there are occasionally students who are considered special cases and are permitted to take and Honors College course, but they do not meet the criteria of 3.25 GPA and are allowed to participate. Savoia believes that what applied under Alec is still the rule w/interim dean Steve Husted. Professor Savoia asked if the Senate Admissions Committee contacted the Freshmen Programs Office, for she believes that office has been created to eliminate some of the issues that have been mentioned. Shaiman responded that yes, we have been in communication with the Freshmen Programs Office, we look at orientation issues, we look at social services, activities, over the past year we have had a lot of these people present to our committee, so that we can become familiar with all of these programs that are in place. It does seem that there is a role for faculty to play, faculty

involvement early on is really beneficial for retention. There is a need for faculty in Living and Learning Communities (LLC), there is something called the faculty associate program, where they assign a faculty member to a freshman dorm (floor) to interact and mentor them, so they see that faculty aren't scary people. There are a lot of ways that faculty can be involved, but they don't know about these options.

Professor C. Singh asked about retention over the schools and how has it changed over time, over the last 10 years. Professor Shaiman responded that she doesn't know over specific schools, this is the overall retention of freshmen in the four entry colleges. Shaiman doesn't have the specific numbers for the past 10 years, but the numbers were quite low and have been increasing over the past 10 years and are at a high of 92.7%, which puts us comparable to our peer institutions, but still a bit lower than some of our aspiration institutions.

Shaiman commented that at the last Faculty Assembly meeting, one of the items that came up had to do with students writing ability, this is something that had been discussed at the Admissions Committee and they have invited two people from the English Department, a person who coordinates the Freshmen writing course to come and speak to their committee on how the course is developed, how it's integrated in to the whole curriculum. We are also having someone from the Writing Intensive courses, so we have a sense of how the writing program is structured and how faculty might be able to help. Professor Caldwell wanted to echo how fantastic the programs are by Student Affairs and Residence Life. I've participated in LLC, Outside the Curriculum and the Faculty Associates program. It really establishes multiple touch points that do lead to increased retention over time.

C. Singh asked about the effort to attract more out of state students and what is the ration of out of state students right now and what were the numbers ten years ago? Professor Shaiman commented that she does not have those numbers at her fingertips. Vice Provost Blair commented that he believes that the current class is comprised of one third of out of state students, which is up significantly from the past.

#### Community Relations Report

Professor Denise Chisholm, Co-Chair

Our mission is to be a facilitator and observer of the interactions between the university and its many external communities. We really have tried very hard to make connections with those members. Our goal is to increase collaboration and over the past few years, that collaboration has improved significantly. Some of our partners include: Community Human Services, the Oakhill Residence Council, the Oakland Business Improvement District, the Oakland Community Council, the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, the

Transportation and Management Association and Peoples Oakland. The theme of Oakland really resonates with everything we do. We meet the third Tuesday of every month, normally at Hillman Library from noon-2 in room 272. Our next meeting is November 16<sup>th</sup> and we welcome anyone to attend. Some of the highlights from the past year include: The Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, the Oakland Food Pantry, the United Way Day of Caring, Project Bundle-up Telethon, the events that have dealt with the disasters in Haiti and also different types of food drives. We also have joint meetings with the Commonwealth Relations Committee, normally held in January. We have a number of presentations – Peoples Oakland put forward a proposal for funding from the Sprout Fund Grant for Public Art for a mural. The Community Relations Committee was able to offer their support, unfortunately due to the architectural design of their building they weren't selected. Presentations also have been regarding community research and projects that are occurring, we also take field trips including: United Cerebral Palsy, we try to hold some of our meetings at our partner locations/agencies, we just recently toured the new Children's Hospital. Our future plans include on November 16<sup>th</sup> a panel discussion from our community partners, also on Tuesday November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Tuesday, December 21 at the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank near Kennywood there are mass food distributions, if interested please contact Steve Zupcic at [stz@pitt.edu](mailto:stz@pitt.edu) to register. You may drive or take the university free shuttle which leaves Pitt at 3:45 and returns by 8 p.m. We are also supporting the November 22, Oakland Neighborhood and its Comprehensive Planning Initiative which will be held in 2017 Cathedral of Learning for faculty interested in research service learning with Oakland community partners. There is also an effort to look into tracking service projects of the community relations committee members, not just those that are supported directly by the committee, but those that are also outreach of the committee members. The Community Relations Committee is proposing for 2011 or 2012, a Plenary that would address Community Engaged Research. Co-Chair Chisholm concluded her report and asked for any comments/questions. Faculty Assembly member Hartman inquired about the staff attending the Food Bank distributions that in the past she had heard the staff had a hard time getting release time to be able to catch the bus at 3:30. Denise commented that she will contact Steve for an update.

#### Plant Utilization and Planning (PUP) Committee Report

Professors Irene Frieze and Paul Munro Co-Chairs

Bicycle safety and bicycle use has been an issue PUP has been concerned with and working on, there has been ongoing effort to place more bicycle racks and bicycle lockers around campus. If anyone knows of an area which is in need of a bicycle rack around

campus please let PUP know. Safety is another issue of concern. There have been a number of thefts lately out of locked offices. Please remember to change combination locks periodically, make sure doors are locked. PUP spoke with Public Safety regarding safety tips, that were passed out to the assembly members. CSSD is promoting making your computer safer. You can have your computer traced if stolen, encrypt your entire hard drive, please go to my.pitt.edu for additional details. A couple of building issues that have come up is a new freshmen dorm which is going to be built on Fifth Avenue across from the Book Center, it is going to be centrally located, it would be devoted to freshmen and would hopefully enhance the freshmen experience. It is being designed to maximize interaction between students. The architects are going to be attending the Sustainability Subcommittee meeting, tomorrow (Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>) at 3 p.m. in 4127 Sennott Square. It is an open meeting for faculty and staff. We are hoping to get high LEED certification. We are also looking for feedback regarding renovating the Book Center. The question would be What do you think the Book Center should look like? What should be included? Faculty Assembly member Hartman asked if the Book Center meeting has been scheduled. Professor Frieze responded not yet, they are now just thinking about it. President Pinsky commented about the long lines of students waiting to buy books. Professor Shaiman asked if someone from Residence Life has been contacted regarding the new freshmen dorm. Professor Munro replied that the architects are working with Residence Life and that they have built a lot of dorms around the country and have heavily researched what students want. Professor Singh commented that the Physics department recently surveyed several hundred students in the introductory Physics courses, to see where the students are buying their text books and why, (it turns out that the intro to Physics book is about \$270/each). We found that more than 50% of the students are buying their textbooks from the bookstore and the students said it was mainly for convenience, that at the Pitt bookstore, you can do an online order and all of your books are ready when you arrive, you give your confirmation number and they give you your package of books, all in one order.

Unfinished Business and/or New Business. None was reported.

Announcements. The Senate Council meeting will be held next week on Wed. November 10<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. in 2700 Posvar Hall. The November 23<sup>rd</sup> Faculty Assembly meeting and the December 1 Senate Council meeting may be cancelled, you will be notified in advance. Vice President Weiss commented that she is looking for authors for future Senate Matters columns and if you are interested in writing a column, please contact her; she would be interested in talking to you. Professor Daley commented that he would be interested in seeing all handouts/reports on-line through the Senate site. The response was

everything that is at the meeting, is also available on-line.	
<u>Adjournment.</u> Meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.	Meeting was adjourned.

Members attending:

Baker, Beatty, Becker, Berry, Bircher, Buchanich, Caldwell, Chisholm, Close, Costantino, Daley, Frank, Frieze, Harbert, Hartman, Kear, Kelly, Kendrick, Lin, Lunsford, Miller, Molinaro, Munro, Neufeld, Otto, Pinsky, Savoia, Shaiman, Singh, Smith, Smitherman, Sparto, Spring, Tuite, Weiss, Wendell

Members not attending:

Arena, Balaban, Bauer, Boone, Brake, Chase, Deitrick, Elliott, Erlen, Greenberg, Hall, Ho, Hravnak, Karapinka, Kearns, Majumdar, Mark, Muller, Pan, Ray, Rinaman, Savinov, Smolinski, Steinberg, Towers, Trovato

\*Excused attendance:

Bartholomae, Bonneau, Burkoff, Chaiklin, Culley, Fabian, Fonzi, Gaddy, Gallagher, Galloway, Henker, Iwema, Johnson, Kovacs, Labrinidis, Landy, Rougeux, Seybert, Sukits, Terry, Wilson Withiam Zutter

Others attending:

Blair, Brendel, DeJong Fedele, Hart

\*Notified Senate office