

University of Pittsburgh  
Faculty Assembly Meeting  
Minutes of February 3, 2004

1. President Bircher called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM.
2. The minutes of the Faculty Assembly meeting on November 25, 2003 were approved as written.
3. Introduction of Items of Unfinished Business and New Business  
President Bircher asked if there was to be any introduction of items of unfinished business or new business aside from the one listed in the revised agenda, which was on electronic communication, introduced by Professor Irene Frieze. There were no other items.
4. Remarks of the President, Nicholas G. Bircher
  - Professor Bircher reported that the Executive Committee met on December 11 with Chief Justice Cappy, in his capacity as Chair of the Board of Trustees. While by mutual agreement the precise content of the meeting is off the record, the discussions were both candid and collegial. The Chief Justice stressed his open door policy. On this basis, all faculty are encouraged to submit issues to President Bircher that they would like to have the Executive Committee address with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
  - Professor Bircher said that Professor Frieze, Vice President of the Senate, has taken on the "University Senate Matters" column in the *University Times*, and has an update. Professor Frieze reported that there have been two recent columns in the *Times* and copies of these columns were on the table in the back of the room. One was a column by Professor Tracy Soska on pedestrian safety in Oakland, which appeared in the January 8 issue. The second was email communication at the university written by Professor Frieze and found in the January 22 issue.
  - Professor Bircher also asked Professor Frieze to report on the Spring Plenary session. Professor Frieze said that the Spring Plenary session will be on April 7 between 2 and 5 PM. Related workshops will be held before the meeting. More details will be provided at the next Faculty Assembly meeting, but there is also information on the Senate website regarding the Plenary session.
  - Professor Bircher reported that the lunch service at the Pitt Club had been closed in December, apparently without due notice to the University community. He asked Professor Olson to discuss this item. Professor Olson said that she was not a member of the Pitt Club but she arranged luncheons there every month; she learned that the Pitt Club was closed for lunch when she called to confirm a lunch. As a result of the new arrangements, having lunch there was more expensive and complicated. She asked whether members of the Faculty Assembly were bothered by its closing.

### Questions and Comments

Professor Pinsky said he did not regret the closing of the Pitt Club because the few times he ate there it was not a good experience. However, he has visited other universities which have nice faculty clubs and he thinks it is regrettable that we do not have a faculty club worthy of the university's stature.

Professor Tobias said that he is a member of the University Club. The Club had tried to have a connection with the University but failed. It has lost about half of its membership in the last ten years and is looking to be taken over. He said that a hotel in Boston made a better offer than the university. He clarified that the university made some kind of a proposal but it was not attractive.

Professor Sukits said the university needed a nice place to dine. He brings senior level business people to campus to speak to his classes and he would like to take his guests to somewhere better than Joe Mama's.

Professor Munro asked Professor Olson for a clarification on why she said that the Pitt Club closed and it cost her more. She explained that now any function at the Pitt Club has to be done through catering, which requires a minimum number of people and is more expensive. She also said that the main dining room will be closed. The Pitt Club continues with special events but not for open lunches.

Professor Bircher said that he would bring the issue of the Pitt Club up with the Chancellor at the lunch next Monday. He also noted that a vendor has a responsibility to inform users in a responsible manner.

On another matter, Professor Tobias said he had followed the recommendation of Judge Cappy that the Faculty Assembly contact other state-related universities regarding the issues of domestic partner benefits. He called the Penn State University Senate Office in December. The person he spoke to asked him to put the issue in writing. He did but has not received an answer. He also contacted Temple and was told that their Senate does not deal with benefit issues; they are the responsibility of the Union. He noted that the Temple benefit for domestic partners is rather limited.

Professor Holland said the Chancellor was asked to contact Penn State and Temple on this issue. Perhaps his efforts were equally unsuccessful. Professor Bircher said that he will contact Senate Presidents at the other three state-related universities to see whether there might be anything they have in common. Professor Balaban observed that so far the consensus seems to be for no contact.

- Issues related to the standing committees of the Senate include the following:
  - Senate Athletics Committee—a so-called framework document regarding report in athletics has been produced by the Steering Committee of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). The issue of whether to endorse the document in whole or in part has been referred to Senate Athletics Committee Co-chairs Eichelberger and Zamboni for consideration.
  - The Benefits and Welfare Committee reports that this year's Medical Advisory Committee met on December 5 and January 30. The faculty representatives are Professors Chesler and Meisel, both members of the Benefits and Welfare Committee. Professor Bircher is a member ex officio. While the mid-negotiation details are not subject to disclosure, the discussions are frank and collaborative. There is also a common desire to improve the level of accountability of all of our health care vendors and intermediaries. It is an

integral part of the MAC's fiduciary responsibility to examine what has been produced for the university and to provide the best possible advice.

#### Questions and Comments

Professor Pinsky said that it is hard to tell how much the cost of health care coverage is going up as the forms we use to sign up for plans do not show last year's cost. Professor Bircher observed that is also difficult because cost shifting versus cost sharing is not clear. The average co-pay is also not clear. Professor Chesler replied that the cost of the plan went up 53 percent. An employee can easily see the increased cost by comparing a June and July paycheck. Professor Chesler also clarified that Professor Carlin is also a member of the MAC.

Professor Bircher asked Professor Chesler to report on the Committee on Recreational Facilities and Personal Fitness that has been appointed by the Chancellor. Professor Chesler said the committee was convened by Vice Provost Pack and it is charged with recommending a second ten-year plan to improve recreational facilities for students, faculty and staff. Professor Chesler said that the university is currently in the seventh year of its first ten-year plan. He said they took a tour of Trees and Bellefield and other recreational facilities except the Petersen. He sees his role on the committee as supporting the idea of improving recreational facilities for students and for faculty and staff and the idea that faculty and staff should have equivalent facilities to those of the students. He observed that Trees and Bellefield are well equipped but have poor ventilation. He suggested that perhaps there could be a building with both a faculty club and athletic facilities.

➤ The guests for the Commonwealth Relations Committee luncheons on February 6 will be Paul Supowitz and Charlie McLaughlin, who will discuss the commonwealth budget. Representative Frank Pistella will be at the February 13th meeting and Representative Joseph Preston will be at the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

➤ The Community Relations Committee received coverage in the January 22 *University Times* about the survey that is available on the UCSUR website to determine if establishing an employee-assisted housing program through the University is feasible. The committee is also studying the issue of pedestrian safety. As noted earlier, this issue was the subject of the January 8 "University Senate Matters" column written by Professor Tracy Soska. A working group co-chaired by SCRC member Wes Rohrer and Chief of Pitt Police Tim Delaney has been formed. Comments can be sent directly to them.

➤ The Computer Usage Committee is on the agenda to discuss the issue of dual UPMC email accounts. However, Professor Bircher asked Professor Close if Jinx Walton had responded to the report on the management of deceased faculty e-mail accounts. Professor Close said that he did not think she had received final approval from the Chancellor yet.

➤ Tenure and Academic Freedom—Professor Bircher asked Professor Pinsky if the committee had heard from Dr. Levine's ad hoc committee regarding IRB procedures. Professor Pinsky replied that he had asked for an update in December and January and has not gotten a response. His committee was supposed to hear from the ad hoc committee by February 1. A memo with an IRB update was sent to all Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Division Chiefs, and

all UPMC Administrations on December 3, 2003 from Randy Juhl and Loren Roth. This memo is available on the back table.

➤ The Committee for Elections met for the first time on January 21. Alice Kuller chairs the Committee and will be providing a report as noted on the agenda.

➤ Professor Hershey chairs the ad hoc committee to study the expedited review process, which met on January 13. The ongoing negotiation has resulted in resolution of all but a relatively few simple points. The remaining points have been summarized in a memo sent to Provost Maher. Professor Balaban added that they had reached the stage where they can meet with the Provost and reach an agreement.

- Professor Bircher said that the University Academic Calendar Committee includes three faculty members: Susan Albrecht, Toby Chapman, and Jim Cassing.
- The University has a new conflict of interest charge and new members of the committee. It appears that only two faculty members are on this committee. He will bring it up with the Chancellor next week.

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

*Computer Usage Committee—Report on dual Pitt/UPMC email accounts*

Professor John Close, chair of the committee, reported on a recommendation of his committee to deal with the fact that many Medical School faculty members are not aware that they have Pitt email accounts as well as UPMC accounts.

Professor Close read the following recommendation which was approved unanimously by his committee in December 2003:

The Senate Computer Usage Committee recognizes that many School of Medicine faculty have both University of Pittsburgh and UPMC e-mail accounts and use one or the other exclusively, which has led to e-mail being sent to an unused account. The Committee further recognizes that forwarding email from a UPMC account to a University or other account may violated HIPAA or other privacy concerns as such e-mail may contain patient or other confidential medical information.

The Committee also recognizes that e-mail sent to a University account can be forwarded to a UPMC account with less likelihood of encountering confidential medical information. The University e-mail forwarding option is a quick and simple solution to the problem and can be accomplished by each user with some brief instruction to inform individuals of the existence of their University of Pittsburgh account and e-mail forwarding procedures.

The Committee recommends that CSSD administration and Steven Kanter, Vice Dean for the School of Medicine, work with the School of Medicine's Responsibility Center Account Administrators and IT staff to improve communication of e-mail forwarding procedures and assist

School of Medicine faculty in implementing e-mail forwarding as required.

Professor Close added that CSSD's estimate is that only about 15 percent of Medical School faculty have not accessed their Pitt account, not 50 percent. He said it is the responsibility of the RCAAs to inform faculty of dual accounts. There was an article recently in the *University Times* on this problem and directions on how to forward mail. Unfortunately, the directions were incorrect. He hopes a correction will be published. In the meantime, one can go to the University's website, click on Technology and then on Computer Accounts. This gives complete access to accounts.

#### Questions and Comments.

Professor Steinmetz noted that the School of Pharmacy also has this problem. She did not realize this until she signed up to use CourseWeb. Professor Close replied that the problem is with RCAAs.

Professor Pinsky thanked Professor Close for dealing with the problem. He noted that the problem is university-wide and it is often hard to solve. He cited his own problems which required him to wait two hours because his original account was so old that no one was familiar with it. He noted that the Pitt account is the one listed by the university and outsiders have written him and he did not receive their important messages. He suggested a moving show by CSSD to various parts of the university to explain the program. Professor Close said that Ms. Walton was planning to visit all the Medical School departments, but it would be too much for her to visit the entire university. Professor Munro mentioned the problem with students and their multiple accounts. Professor Close said that students usually are better at forwarding.

Professor Salama raised another issue—that of accessing university email from off campus and the problems of trying to forward e-mail to a hotmail or other account. Professor Close said that it is now possible to access email through the web or through My.Pitt.edu.

Since it seemed that the problem of more than one e-mail accounts was university-wide, it was suggested that the motion be amended. However, that turned out to be too complicated. Professor Frieze proposed passing the motion as written but then asking the Computer Usage Committee to consider the broader issue. Professor Pinsky asked that there be some follow up and Professor Bircher asked the committee to do a follow up.

Professor Bircher called for a vote on the original recommendation. **The motion was passed** unanimously except for one abstention.

#### *Senate Committee for Elections*

Ms. Alice Kuller, Chair, reported that the committee met two weeks ago and will meet again this week. The window is small because they want the ballots to be completed by the end of the month. There are 15 committees with five slots each. Any recommendations may be given to her or another member of the committee. A list of the members of the committee is on the back table and the Senate website has

the mission statement and other information on the various committees. She also asked for suggestions for the Faculty Assembly.

6. New Business

Professor Frieze brought up the issue of electronic communication on the lower campus. She noted that the upper campus has made wide use of electronic communication but the lower campus does not. She referred to her column on this issue that was in the *University Times*. She argued that her proposed motion would be a first step towards greater use of electronic communication.

The resolution reads:

As a first step in moving toward greater use of electronic communication rather than paper, minutes for Faculty Assembly and Senate Council meetings will no longer be routinely mailed out with the agenda. The URL for finding the minutes on the website will be included in the agenda that will still be mailed out to everyone.

Questions and Comments

Professor Frieze was asked why the Provost does not want university wide communication through email. Professor Pinsky said the reason he gave last year was that he did not want to denigrate the importance of issues. Some things are better dealt with on paper.

Professor Belle and Costantino suggested that the agenda and minutes be sent as an email attachment. Professor Frieze agreed to accept that as a friendly amendment. Professor Muenzer said that his department's computer screens are hard to read and he would like the default to be paper. Professor Frieze disagreed and said she thought the default should be email and that if a Senate member wanted a paper copy, he or she would have to request it.

Professor Belle asked whether we know if everyone on Faculty Assembly gets email. Professor Balaban said that email verification is necessary to make sure that is the case.

Professor Brush asked if minutes would be archived on the Web and was told that they would be (as they are now).

Professor Beatrous said he does not like attachments and suggested a link in the agenda instead.

The motion as informally revised would also include sending out the agenda for Faculty Assembly and Senate Council through e-mail. In order to implement this, the Senate Office would first verify all e-mail addresses. Members would be notified of the change and would be informed that if they wished to continue to receive paper mailings, they could notify the Senate Office. Agendas would then be sent via email, and would include a link to the minutes on the Senate website. When possible, other Faculty Assembly and Senate Council documents needed for meetings would be sent in advance via email, but there would continue to be hard copies at the Faculty Assembly and Senate Council meetings.

**The revised motion carried with three no votes and two abstentions.**

7. Announcements

Professor Chesler mentioned that the Human Resources department has a website and he hoped that faculty members would read it. It has new items that are the culmination of many discussions in Benefits and Welfare. These items included things such as: checklists for faculty who travel and may need medical service outside of Pittsburgh; health insurance for children in college; retirement plans; information for survivors. Professor Chesler said that some of this information is not readily available from Human Resources or incorrect information is given. He also asked that if any problems are observed that they be reported to the Benefits and Welfare Committee or Human Resources.

With respect to the flexible benefits card, Professor Chesler said that the IRS requires the EBDS to check up on items purchased with the card to make sure only acceptable items were purchased with it. Thus it is important to save receipts for at least six months even if you buy them with the card.

Human Resources will also put out a benefits newsletter at the request of Benefits and Welfare. There is a new level of professionalism in Human Resources and they are expanding staff and services. We need to test the service and keep them informed.

Professor Close said that the Computer Usage Committee had addressed seven other issues raised at earlier Faculty Assembly meetings. He added that we have to be careful what we ask for. After September 11 the Chancellor sent an email to the entire university, the only time this has been done. He received a lot of complaints.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Josephine E. Olson, Secretary